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Leadership challenge ruled out

Buoyant Tory MPs to stick with Major

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND JILL SHERMAN

SENIOR Conservatives capitalised on improved party morale last night by formally ruling out any challenge to John Major's leadership before the next general election.

The surprise move came after a series of strong question time performances by the Prime Minister exploiting the Harrier, Harman affair, and as the Labour leader himself acknowledged the grime the Tories had reaped from Ms Harman's decision to send her son Joseph to St Olave's grammar school in Orpington, rather than to a local comprehensive.

The Conservatives were further boosted yesterday when a former Labour policy director suggested that Mr Blair's "stakeholder society" would cost billions of pounds, requiring heavy public sector investment and higher borrowing. The Tory chairman, Brian Mawhinney, immediately declared that the "real cost of Labour" had been exposed and warned voters to watch their wallets.

Mr Mawhinney meanwhile warmly welcomed the Conservative 1992 Committee executive's decision to suspend the rules governing leadership elections to preclude a challenge in November. He said it was very sensible.

The decision was taken to prevent renewed speculation about Mr Major in the local elections in May. Senior party members said last night that a challenge "this year" would have been "unthinkable", but that would not have stopped the press writing about one.

In the meantime, the present rules are being reviewed, with many Tory MPs believing that there should be no mechanism at all for a serving Prime Minister to be challenged.

The 1992 decision is evi-

dence of the dramatic change of mood among Tory MPs, who are eagerly awaiting the next opinion polls to see what impact the education row has had on their rating. Although most accept that they face an uphill struggle to pull back Labour's lead, they believe that they have been presented with a clear target.

"Mr Blair recognised that last night in his first big party speech since Ms Harman said she was sending her son Joseph to St Olave's grammar school in Orpington, rather than to a local comprehensive.

He then sought to turn the hypocrisy charges that had been levelled at his party against the Tories, saying: "There is the party that says one thing and does another. They say one thing before the election and they do another afterwards. They are the risk. They are the danger. A Tory fifth team is the nightmare."

"Will you be paying to see a doctor? Will your child be taught in a class of 100? Will you be trapped in negative equity? Will you all be on contracts that mean you can be fired at a moment's notice without explanation?"

Mr Blair had earlier faced further embarrassment when the former Labour policy director Roland Wales admitted in the *New Statesman* that the "stakeholder society" would not come cheap. "In the housing sector alone, it is estimated that provision of adequate social housing will cost between £10 and £20 billion. How will Labour pay for it?"

Voters wanted: more jobs, better schools and better health and housing, Mr Wales wrote. "Awaiting the fruits of growth is unlikely to be enough: a Labour chancellor will have to find the funds to start making good the chronic public sector investment gap, while calming the fears of the markets."

But last night party sources dismissed both his claims and his role in the party. "Roland Wales was left out of policy formation when he worked for the Labour Party and from what he said today you can see why," an official said. "He had no input whatsoever into policy making and, even if he wanted them to be, his views were not taken seriously."

Harman revolt, page 10

Routine loyalty, orchestrated adulation: after a long interruption, the Tory Party is back on track

— Matthew Parris, page 2

And the storm showed no sign of subsiding as emergency motions were tabled in three of the nine branches in her Peckham constituency demanding she resign from the Shadow Cabinet.

In his "meet-the-people" speech in Brentford, Mr Blair addressed the issue head-on as he attacked the Tories. "It was not a member of the Shadow Cabinet that lost people their jobs, their homes, their businesses," he said. "It was not an 11-year-old boy that raised their taxes. It was a 17-year-old Government that has made too many mistakes and told too many lies for the public ever to forget or forgive what they have done to our country."



Margaret Webb and her husband Keith with JJ last night after the amicable settlement on the pup's future

Deal on custody ends dogfight

By TIM JONES

A TEARFUL and acrimonious battle over the ownership of JJ, a playful and potentially valuable Irish setter pup, was decided yesterday when a judge agreed it could remain with the couple who bought it.

But the six-month-old bitch, registered with the Kennel Club as Goldings Hellebora, will have to return in 18 months to where she was born to give birth to a litter. In a settlement which mirrors complicated divorce case access agreements, both sides will have the right to visit the dog when it is not with them.

The saga began last October when Margaret Webb of Swindon, Wiltshire, was presented with the puppy by her children who had clubbed together £350 to buy it to help her overcome a serious illness.

Three days later, Biddy Evans, who with her husband George runs the Fosse Dogel and Cattery near Cirencester, rang to say she had mistakenly sold them a

bitch instead of a dog and wanted it back.

Yesterday, minutes before the warring parties were due to continue their battle at Swindon County Court, their solicitors reached an agreement which Judge John McNaught doubted could have been resolved by litigation.

Once JJ comes into season after her second birthday Mrs Evans will have the right to take her away for a week to be mated with a stud dog.

Then, eating only food approved of by Mrs Evans, JJ will spend eight weeks of her pregnancy with the Webb family, before returning to the Dogotel to give birth. JJ will spend ten weeks there with her pups before being returned to Mrs Webb. If the mating is successful and produces at least three puppies, including one satisfactory breeding bitch which Mrs Evans will keep, the tug of love will end.



agreed to take special care to ensure she does not have a brief and fatal encounter with a mongrel.

In addition, to ensure JJ will never be substituted for a less valuable look-alike she will have an identifying microchip inserted under her skin.

Dominic Kelly, Mrs Webb's solicitor, would not comment on suggestions that JJ, known to Mrs Evans as Flora, was valued at up to £10,000.

After the agreement Mrs Webb, 48, said: "I am delighted. These past few months have been a nightmare. We love JJ and she has bonded with our other red setter."

Mrs Evans claimed she would never have sold JJ to the couple if she had known that they were unemployed as keeping a pedigree dog costs hundreds of pounds a year.

The Internet could also be a boon for entrepreneurs with good ideas and novel products but no big budgets to advertise their wares in the traditional ways.

The secure payments system requires someone using the Internet to have special software which will be embedded in standard products like Windows 95. When the user dials the credit card details into the computer, the software scrambles the numbers into a code which is transmitted to the seller.

Reform of Nato urged by Chirac

President Chirac, on the first state visit to America by a French leader in 12 years, has proposed a transatlantic charter to reform Nato and place more responsibility for security on Europe.

In his address to a joint meeting of Congress, Mr Chirac called for a renewed partnership. He said American commitment, both militarily and politically, was still essential to the stability of a growing Europe, but he emphasised that Washington need not always play an active role. Solidarity was "the best security". Page 13

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Songwriters deprived of royalties

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

THOUSANDS of composers and songwriters have been deprived of income by inefficiency and poor management at the Performing Rights Society, which collects royalties on their behalf, a government report concluded yesterday.

The report by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission found that the society, Britain's only licensing body for composers and songwriters, operated in a monopoly situation and against the public interest.

The MMC's year-long inquiry into the society was prompted by long-running complaints from both struggling and well-known composers, including Lionel Bart, who wrote *Oliver*, and the Irish rock group U2. The

Dublin band has started legal proceedings to challenge the society's right to collect royalties for live performances.

Under the live royalty system, introduced three years ago, the society records details of performances at 500 large venues and then uses this as a yardstick for all halls. Writers of classical and minority forms of music allege that this ignores many performances of their work in small halls.

The society, founded by a group of music hall composers in 1914, raises more than £150 million in royalties for its 29,000 members.

John Taylor, competition and Consumer Affairs Minister, said that the MMC report had found "evidence of inefficiency arising from deficiencies in corporate structure and management practices".

The MMC was "not convinced that the society's practice of exclusivity is so essential that no further exceptions can be allowed," he added.

A spokeswoman for the MMC said: "Lots of money that the society has been collecting has gone into administration, rather than to the artists."

The MMC report makes more than 40 recommendations, aimed largely at improving the society's efficiency and its accountability to composers and songwriters. The Director-General of Fair Trading has now given the society four months in which to implement the reforms.

Dominic McGrigal, per-

former and composer administrator at the Incorporated Society of Musicians, which represents composers, welcomed the findings. "Their administration costs got up to 20 per cent of what they collected. We regard this as high and would like to see it reduced to 12 to 15 per cent."

Terri Anderson, a spokeswoman for the society, said that over a third of the actions proposed in the report had already been met.

John Hutchinson, who was appointed chief executive of the society last November, said: "Publication of the report will add a spur to the total strategic review of the business, which is planned for 1996."

UFO 'buzzed' airliner at Manchester airport

By HARVEY ELLIOTT AIR CORRESPONDENT

A BRITISH Airways passenger jet had a close encounter with an unidentified flying object while landing at Manchester airport, an official report disclosed last night.

The Boeing 757, with 60 people on board, was overtake at high speed by a wedge-shaped craft as the plane descended through 4,000ft on the final stages of a journey from Milan.

Captain Roger Wills reported that the UFO, which was emblazoned with small white lights and possibly a black stripe down its side, flashed silently down the side of the jet so close that his co-pilot, First Officer Mark Stuart, involuntarily ducked as it went by.

There was no sound and no wake but both pilots were so concerned that they filed a formal "airmils" report. The Civil Aviation Authority launched an investigation, the fourth such incident since 1957, and after a year-

long inquiry concluded yesterday that they could find no likely explanation. The three previous reported sightings also baffled the CAA experts.

The incident happened at 6.48pm on January 6 last year with the aircraft just above the clouds and visibility at least ten miles. Then air traffic controllers had the following conversation with Flight 5061.

B737: "We just had something go down the right hand side, just above us very fast."

Manchester: "Well there's nothing seen on radar. Was it an aircraft?"

B737: "Well, it had lights. It went down the starboard side very quick."

Captain Wills and First Officer Stuart are certain that the object was solid and not a balloon, a model aircraft or even a military "Stealth" aircraft which the captain had seen before and would have recognised.

Both pilots should be commended for their courage in submitting a report, the investigators said.

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Jolly jesters are in the mood for auto-slaver

The guffaws came to order, like canned laughter in a TV comedy show. Government backbenchers cheered John Major's arrival, cheered his departure, and fluttered their order papers in a closing ceremony that might have been rehearsed for an American football game.

Routine loyalty, orchestrated adulation, after a long interruption, the Tory party is back on track, locked in cruise-control, stuck on auto-slaver. What will have impressed the party managers at PM's Questions yesterday afternoon was not the way the

Tories cheered the Prime Minister's good jokes, but the way they cheered his awful ones, too. The synchronised panting of the poodles, the gentle slurp of the wet tongue against the brogue shoe... these, like leather on willow, are music to a Chief Whip's ears.

If, in his dark days last spring, John Major had performed as yesterday, there would have been a few ragged cheers from his friends, no more. But now we shall report that he had another good day, Tony Blair and Major strutted and performed, but in mood.

Blair and Major stalked



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

into the chamber, one after the other and almost in step, during a question to the agricultural minister about pigs. It is not clear whether they chose pigs especially for their entrance fanfare, but the minister looked up from the dispatch box, startled by the passion his opinion on pig stalls seems to have triggered, as a rather complicated answer on the tethering of sows suddenly elicited a small

cheer, then a larger one. Blair and Major sat down and adopted wise expressions as the minister ploughed on with his advice on pig husbandry.

First up, the brilliant Dr Charles Goodson-Wicks (C. Wimbledon) placed adoringly at the Prime Minister's feet a little fact he had discovered about trade union support for private hospitals. Mr Major found this fact "fascinating". Cue canned laughter.

Tony Blair, lips pursed, dived on for a while about administrative costs in the health service, and Major commented that the NHS had been "undermanaged". At that, Labour was supposed to howl, giving Major his cue to say "not my words, Madam Speaker..." and explain that the phrase was Margaret Thatcher's. In fact Labour did not howl, but Major went ahead with his joke anyway, and the Tories roared with laughter anyway.

Blair now tried the same trick, offering advice on the NHS then demanding: "Are you prepared to tell the Secretary of State to do as I ask?" At this, the Tories were supposed to jeer (they did), prompting Blair's reply "not my words, Madam Speaker..." and the hilarious revelation that a Tory had said this.

Really, this is getting ridiculous. What next? Will Blair say "Chilly for the time of year [see Labour yelp]. Not my words, Madam Speaker, but those of Michael Heseltine last Wednesday" [Labour MPs fall about? Mr Blair's scriptwriting team do not seem to have grasped the point about these jokes: the phrase in question has to sound something you would

not expect the other side to have said. Permit this column to explain that it's no good finding any old phrase. It has to be topical, and helpful, to Labour's argument.

Mr Major then hit off one goodish joke welcoming Labour boroughs with shares in privatised industries "to the stockbroker belt", and one not so good joke, noting that the Labour leader had provided Harriet Harman with "an assisted place" in the Cabinet. Both were greeted with wild Tory laughter. But then "nothing succeeds like success".

Not my words, Madam Speaker...

Asylum details must be disclosed

Ministers were yesterday ordered to disclose details of discussions with the Government of Dominica about providing asylum for the Saudi dissident Muhammad al-Masari. Judge Pearl, at an Immigration Appellate Authority hearing, directed the Home Secretary to release information surrounding the case. Dr Masari's attempt to postpone a full hearing of his appeal against removal from Britain has been refused.

'Sex tours' review
A legal loophole that allows British criminals to escape punishment for offences abroad is to be examined in a full review ordered by the Home Secretary. The study is aimed at the growing "sex tourism" industry in which people travel abroad and commit sexual offences against children.

Fossilised flower
Fossils of what could be the oldest flowering plant have been found in Kent. The 10in plant, like a water buttercup, dates from 130 million years ago and was found by Dr Ed Jarzemowski, keeper of natural history at Maidstone Museum. It has been thought flowering plants did not develop until much later.

Scott publication
The long-awaited report of the Scott inquiry into the arms-to-Iraq affair is to be published on February 15. The findings of the investigation, which many heavily criticised ministers, will be released under the terms of the 1840 Parliamentary Papers Act, which will prevent individuals from suing.

Police win say
The Home Office made further concessions to the police about who controls M15 operations in fighting organised crime. The Bill ending the Security Service's new role was changed to make clear that a senior police officer will be involved in arranging the co-ordination of M15 activities.

School code call
The Government was urged to publish a code of practice for supply agencies after a temporary teacher allegedly lashed out at seven-year-olds for not listening to a story. The woman was said to have slapped two boys around the face and pulled a girl's hair at a primary school in South Woodford, east London.

Pub killings
Michael Murray, 44, a taxi firm boss from Selsey, West Sussex, was convicted of shooting two men at point-blank range with a revolver. Maidstone Crown Court found him guilty of the murders of Sean Farrelly, 24, and Jason Coopers, 22, who were shot in the terrace in the Star Gazer pub in Selsey.

Six life terms
A paranoid schizophrenic who killed two people and attacked others after a laceration released him from hospital was given six life sentences yesterday. Wayne Hutchinson, 21, a drug dealer in Brixton, south London, was convicted at the Old Bailey of murder and wounding.

Skippy down
Skippy, the Tiger Moth following Alan Cobham's 1926 route to South Africa, suffered engine failure eight miles out to sea after leaving Brindisi, southern Italy, yesterday. Tony Richards, the pilot, managed to glide to safety on a firing range but then came under fire from the Italian air force.

GPs and foreign staff drafted in Hospitals struggle with shortage of casualty doctors

By JEREMY LAURANCE AND JOANNA BAILE

CASUALTY departments are facing the worst shortage of doctors that can be recalled and are struggling to remain open during the winter peak demand, consultants said yesterday.

The British Medical Association said there was a "desperate crisis looming" which was already leaving some casualty departments dangerously understaffed.

In areas such as Essex where recruitment is difficult, hospitals are having to offer "golden hellos" worth £2,000 to attract junior doctors and nurses. Some hospitals have hired GPs from the Continent, South Africa and Australia.

There has been a sharp rise in emergency admissions, estimated at 13 per cent last year, and a shortage of hospital beds. The BMA reported last month that casualty departments had been forced to close temporarily because they had no empty beds.

The reduction in junior doctors' hours and the ending of the compulsory requirement for trainee surgeons to spend time working in casualty have contributed to the shortage. An extra 2,500 senior house-officer posts have been created but there are insufficient graduates to fill them.

Dr Howard Baderman, consultant in charge of accident and emergency at London's University College Hospital, said: "I understand that juniors are being offered £1,000 when they take up the six-month contract and then £1,000 on completion."

Dr Helen Cugnani, consul-

tant in Accident and Emergency at the Royal London Hospital, said the department had failed to fill all its 24 posts. "We are a teaching hospital. Other hospitals are likely to be worse off. I have never known such difficulties recruiting junior staff."

Hospitals are resorting to various measures:

- Mayday Hospital, Croydon, has agreed a £100,000 deal with local GPs to ease the burden on the Accident and Emergency Department; GPs take over the treatment of minor injuries.
- At the Prince Charles Hospital, Merthyr Tydfil, GPs work in casualty at weekends.
- Edgware Hospital, in Middlesex, has three of six junior doctor posts to fill in its casualty department. Having advertised in journals, it is to try medical locum agencies.
- Peterborough Hospitals Trust in Cambridgeshire had

to pay GPs £400 a night to staff casualty departments. After several months and recruiting from abroad, their posts are now full.

Alan Langlands, chief executive of the NHS, admitted last month that casualty departments were strained to the limit. In an interview in the *Health Service Journal* he said: "I'm constantly seeing A&E departments under pressure. It's a long time since I have seen an A&E consultant wearing a shirt and tie. They are at it day in and day out."

Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, yesterday admitted that the Accident and Emergency service faced problems but said they were not unexpected. "It doesn't take a rocket scientist to work out that if you have fewer people working shorter hours you need more people around."

"That is exactly why my colleague Gerald Malone [the Health Minister] convened a meeting just before Christmas to see what can be done," he said. Mr Malone announced that restrictions on A&E departments appointing staff-grade doctors would be lifted, and an inquiry into giving GPs a greater role in treating minor injuries.

Mr Dorrell was speaking on Radio 4's *The World at One* in response to a survey by Dr Ian Stewart, consultant in Accident and Emergency at Derriford Hospital, Plymouth, who had said that up to one in five junior doctor posts would fall vacant in casualty by next week. Junior doctors traditionally switch to new jobs on the first Monday in February.



Langlands says doctors are working round clock



An RUC officer clashes with a mourner at the funeral of Gino Gallagher in Belfast

Adams raises lone voice against all-party polls

By MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON AND NICHOLAS WOOD

GERRY ADAMS was in danger of isolation last night in his opposition to elections in Northern Ireland. As the Sinn Féin president entered critical talks in Washington with the Clinton administration, Dublin appeared to be backpedalling on its outright opposition to elections as the passport to all-party negotiations about a permanent peace settlement.

Britain was hoping that Tony Lake, National Security Adviser to President Clinton, would put pressure on Mr Adams to drop his "unplacable" opposition to elections as the next step in the search for peace. President Clinton was expected to "drop by" on the talks - a prospect that raised British expectations that the Administration was "sweetening" its message that Mr Adams should accept elections as a passport to all-party talks.

Dick Spring, the Irish Dep-

uty Prime Minister, emerged from four hours of talks in London with Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, to concede that John Major's counter-proposal to last week's Mitchell report recommending decommissioning during all-party talks remained in play.

"The reservations still remain but at the same time we are prepared to discuss the proposals," Mr Spring told a news conference. Last week, he condemned the British plan as a "cul de sac".

Irish government sources admitted that although details and obstacles to progress had still to be resolved, the plan for an elected body as a platform for all-party talks had not been ruled out. In another sign that London and Dublin are working overtime to heal last week's rift, the two ministers agreed to hold a further meet-

ing in Dublin next Wednesday. There was more violence in Ulster yesterday as mourners clashed with the RUC at the funeral of a leading republican who was shot dead in Belfast earlier this week.

The funeral of Gino Gallagher, the reputed leader of the Irish National Liberation Army, had to be postponed until today after scuffles broke out outside his house in Belfast as police tried to prevent him being given a parliamentary send-off.

A university lecturer, who is a self-confessed member of the IRA, lost his appeal against conviction, yesterday for plotting to bomb mainland Britain. Felim O'Doherty, who was jailed for 25 years in 1994 after being caught with bombs, Semtex, arms and ammunition, claimed that he did not get a fair trial at the Old Bailey.

Bottomley to hold talks on sports coverage

By NICHOLAS WOOD

URGENT consultations on television coverage of premier sporting events will be announced by the Government today.

Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary, will try to defuse a looming political row over satellite broadcasters monopolising national sporting occasions, such as the Wimbledon finals, by publishing a discussion paper. She will also invite broadcasters, the sports authorities, viewers' organisations and sportsmen and women to meetings over the next few weeks.

The BBC and ITV, backed by a cross-party campaign led by Labour, want the Government to ban subscription television services from acquiring exclusive rights to eight "listed events":

the Olympic Games, the Derby, the Grand National, the Wimbledon finals, Test matches in England, the football World Cup, the FA Cup Final and the Scottish FA Cup Final.

Mrs Bottomley will try to concentrate the debate on the need to balance the widest public access to great sporting occasions with the freedom of sporting bodies to sell television rights to the highest bidder.

However, it is understood that privately she is opposed to "heroic change" in the existing arrangements, which in practice debars satellite broadcasters such as BSkyB, partly owned by News International, parent company of *The Times*, from making significant inroads. Her stance has been bolstered by the decision of the International Olympic Committee to sign a deal with the BBC giving it

coverage of the Games until 2008. Her paper is likely to point out that most of the eight events are already the subject of contracts with terrestrial broadcasters and are not up for negotiation in the immediate future.

Mrs Bottomley is understood to believe that fundamental changes in the rules covering television rights can be postponed until the digital television revolution planned for the turn of the century comes about.

The new technology will create about 20 terrestrial channels and will greatly expand BBC and ITV outlets. She is said to believe that the advent of this new framework could prove the catalyst for a free market in big sporting events.

Her paper will say that many members of the public see events such as Wimbledon as an important part of

the national heritage and one that should be available as widely as possible. But that has to be balanced against the boost to sports facilities and coaching for young people that can flow from sporting bodies securing the full market rate for their star events.

Mrs Bottomley's hand has been forced by amendments to the Broadcasting Bill, now in the Lords, tabled by Labour with cross-party support.

Lord Donoughue, Labour's national heritage spokesman in the Lords, said: "Together with Lord Howell [the former Labour sports minister] and leading peers from all parties, we are seeking to prevent anyone having a monopoly on the live showing of any of the eight listed events. We don't want to ban Sky from showing them but we will ensure that they will not have a monopoly."

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Footballer jailed for butting opponent escapes ban



Ferguson served six weeks in prison for the offence

THE Everton footballer Duncan Ferguson yesterday won his legal battle to overturn a 12-match ban for head-butting another player. The ruling could pave the way for more sporting bodies to be challenged in the courts. A judge has ruled that the Scottish Football Association's disciplinary committee acted beyond its powers in punishing the £4-million striker for an offence that happened nearly two years ago when he was playing for Rangers. Ferguson served six weeks of a three-month jail sentence for the assault.

Lord Macfadyen said the punishment should be lifted in a judgment released yesterday at the Court of Session in Edinburgh. The successful judicial review in the Scottish courts is thought to be the first in Britain against a sporting body. Courts in England and Wales — which have taken a more restrictive view of the boundaries of judicial review — do not have to follow it. But lawyers believe it will have influence. Edward Grayson, a sports law barrister and author of *Sport and the Law*, said: "Sports bodies have always been held to be non-public bodies, although they do have public functions. There have been a number of complaints against sporting administrative bodies, including the Aga Khan against

the Jockey Club over the disqualification of his winning racehorse, Alyssa, and the Football League against the Football Association over its establishing of a premier league. But they have all failed." Mr Grayson said perhaps the English courts would follow suit and there could be a rash of similar challenges to the decisions of sporting bodies. Ferguson head-butted John McStay, a Raith Rovers player, during a match at Ibrox in April 1994. Ferguson's lawyers argued at a court hearing earlier this month that the SFA's disciplinary committee had not complied with the rules in imposing the 12-match ban and so had no powers to do so. The lawyers said that under

the association's rule book, the committee could impose punishment only in exceptional cases of a player's misconduct. This punishment had to be "additional"; it could be imposed only where the player had been booked by the referee. But as Ferguson had not been punished by the referee during the game for the offence, there had been no original punishment and so the committee could not impose an additional one, his lawyers said. The SFA opposed the argument. But Lord Macfadyen said in the conclusion of his judgment yesterday that the committee had acted *ultra vires* in its attempt to deal with Ferguson's conduct "in an

incident which was not reported by any of the match officials and in respect of which there was no scale penalty incurred. "It follows that the severe censure and 12-match suspension which they imposed were invalid and of no effect." He said he would therefore rule in favour of the player. Blair Morgan, Mr Ferguson's solicitor, said that the outcome was the end of a long nightmare for the player. "He is delighted he is able to resume his playing career. If the decision had gone against him, he would potentially have missed the next seven games. "He is back to playing and back to match fitness. A different result today would have been a setback.

He can resume his career with Everton and Scotland. He is exceptionally pleased, it is the end of a very unpleasant period of his life." Joe Royle, the manager of Everton, said he was delighted that Ferguson's ban had been lifted. "We are all delighted for Duncan, the club and the fans," he told Radio City in Liverpool. "Let's just get on with the football now." "It has been hanging over his head and we are delighted. We don't want to say too much more apart from that because the thing has dragged on for so long and we want to keep it as low-key as possible."

Footballer banned, page 40

Part-timers killed in explosion were wrongly told boy was trapped in upstairs room

Two firemen die after going back into empty house

TWO part-time firemen died inside a blazing house yesterday after wrongly being told that a young boy was trapped inside. Stephen Griffin and Kevin Lane were killed when a sudden explosion wrecked the terraced house in the former mining village of Blaenau Gwent. They had already brought out one five-year-old boy — who later died — but then went back inside believing that his younger brother was trapped. Terry Glossop, Gwent Chief Fire Officer, said: "There was no one else in the house but these two firemen did not think for a minute of their own safety before going back into the building. We are all dreadfully shocked and saddened." Other members of the fire crew, who witnessed the deaths of their colleagues, are to be offered counselling. They were in tears yesterday as they stood outside the charred shell of the two-bedroom house on a new housing estate at the edge of Blaenau Gwent. Mr Griffin, 42, a married hospital porter with two children, and Mr Lane, 32, a factory worker, who leaves a wife and eight-year-old son, both lived in the village. Blaenau residents are planning to set up a fund to help the families of the two men. Both men, who earned a £1,500 annual retainer, were called out at 6am to tackle the fire which broke out at the house where Catherine Hardford, a single mother in her 20s, lived with her two sons, Daniel, five and Joshua, four. The deaths of the two part-time firemen takes the number of firefighters lost to 20 since 1990. There are 14,792 retained firefighters in England and Wales, who, apart from their retainer, receive £10.50 for the first hour of an



The wrecked house in which three died

incident and £5 an hour for subsequent hours. Mr Griffin's widow Margaret said last night: "He was dedicated to the job. He knew the risks involved. He was on call last night and went out as normal last night but he never came back." Flags flew at half mast yesterday over the borough council offices as an investigation was launched into how the fireman died. It appeared that a neighbour believed Joshua was still inside the house but he had escaped with his mother. The two firemen, wearing breathing apparatus and carrying a hose reel, went back into the house in search of the boy. As they climbed the stairs an explosion threw them backwards into the sitting room which was already burning fiercely. The men died in spite of their colleagues' efforts to save them. Mr Glossop said: "The whole thing is a tragedy, but the worst aspect of all was the information they were given was wrong. They acted in good faith and thought they were trying to save a life." Bernard Astender, the leader



The Blaenau fire crew last summer showing Stephen Griffin, back row, left, and Kevin Lane, front row, right

of Blaenau Gwent Borough Council, paid tribute to Mr Griffin, whom he knew socially. "He was a genuinely nice guy, an ordinary family man. The same goes for Kevin. They were just ordinary guys doing a job they valued." At the village fire station colleagues of the dead firemen were still on duty yesterday. The station, which until yesterday had never lost a firefighter, normally has a full complement of 12 part-timers, operating a single appliance. Chris Brown, the full-time station officer, said: "If there is a call out today we will respond as we always do. The men are dedicated to the job." David Bishop, Mr Lane's brother-in-law, said: "Kevin was devoted to the fire service.

When he joined it was a new venture in his life. He had discovered some way he could help people." Annette Edwards, a neighbour, said Mrs Hardford had been asleep in the sitting room with Joshua when the fire broke out. Daniel was trapped upstairs. "She was in such a state of shock that she just sat there staring ahead. The firemen

were incredibly brave." Daniel, a pupil at St Mary's Roman Catholic school in Brynmawr, was brought out by firemen but died despite attempts to revive him. Evelyn Wile, the school's headmistress, said: "The staff are deeply shocked and saddened by this terrible tragedy. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all the families."

Request for a waitress was sexual prejudice

A HOTELIER was found guilty yesterday of discriminating against men for saying he wanted to hire a waitress. John Tatum was taken to an industrial tribunal for sex discrimination even though he eventually hired a man. Mr Tatum, 47, made the passing remark to a jobcentre official after becoming tired of unemployed men turning up for interviews at the hotel he owns in Sandown, Isle of Wight. The official reported his comment and the Equal Opportunities Commission decided to take action. He will not be fined. The tribunal in Southampton heard that Mr Tatum had telephoned the Shanklin Jobcentre last March to withdraw his advertisement for staff after receiving a number of unsuitable applicants. Rachel Badman, the official, said he told her: "I have had several scruffy men with rips through their aoses or covered in tattoos. What I want is presentable females." Mr Tatum told the tribunal he had been unhappy with the quality of applicants from the jobcentre. "There was one man who sent with dirty fingernails, bells hanging from his ears, who came in shouting across the hallway: 'I've come for the job, mate.'"

Egyptian wine kills British tourist

A BRITISH holidaymaker fell into a coma and died after drinking three glasses of Egyptian red wine contaminated with methanol. Charlotte Common, 55, a widow, was staying in an apartment near Cairo with two friends when she bought the bottle of Egyptian Cabernet Sauvignon from a supermarket. She drank it with a meal alone in the flat. The next day she was taken to a hospital in Cairo but lapsed into a coma. Mrs Common, from Washington, Tyne and Wear, was flown home by air ambulance but never regained consciousness and died on January 9. Yesterday Pamela Denis, who is still at the Abu Kessem apartments where Mrs Common fell ill, said: "We are very upset. I have been a friend for 20 years. The wine was bought from a local supermarket which is very popular with the British Embassy." Methanol can be used as a cheap substitute for alcohol. Several people have died from drinking adulterated Egyptian brandies and gins. A notorious wine scandal in Italy in 1986 involving methanol claimed 22 lives. Methanol becomes dangerous at levels of more than 1g per litre. It is metabolised in the body to formaldehyde and formic acid, both of which are toxic. In the past the United States Embassy in Cairo has warned tourists not to touch any Egyptian alcohol. The Foreign Office said Mrs Common's death appeared to be an isolated incident. Although Egypt's may be the world's longest-established wine industry, it is also one of the worst. Hugo Dunn-Meynell, of the International Wine and Food Society, said: "From what I have heard, it is not surprising Egyptian wine has poisoned someone." Mrs Common's family, who were at her bedside when she died, said they were investigating the circumstances of her death.



Charlotte Common fell into coma in Cairo

Farmer told to return antiques to listed house

A FARMER claimed yesterday that a High Court decision ordering him to return a magnificent carillon clock and three huge chandeliers to a country mansion would make it unsafe for anyone to buy furniture from a listed building. Hew Kennedy, of Bridgnorth, Shropshire, bought the French baroque clock and three ornate chandeliers from a previous owner of Leighton Hall, Welshpool, a Grade II* listed Victorian neo-Gothic mansion built in 1851 for John Naylor of Liverpool, a banker. The hall, commanding a view of Powis Castle, cost Naylor £2 million at the time. It boasts castellations, towers, gargoyles and multicoloured windows. The building has been largely unused since the early 1960s, when it was briefly used as a school. After Mr Kennedy bought and removed the clock and chandeliers in 1992, Montgomeryshire District Council issued enforcement notices requiring their return. The notices were upheld by John Redwood, then Welsh Secretary, in 1994 on the advice of a planning inspector that the pieces were fixtures and not fittings. In a judgment given in the High Court yesterday Mr Justice Ognall rejected a further appeal by Mr Kennedy and confirmed that he must return the ornate pieces within six months. Mr Kennedy was also ordered to pay costs. "This is the first time a chandelier has been declared part of a listed building," Mr Kennedy said yesterday. "These are not even part of the original decor or the architect's design. They were installed by the owner after the house was built." He said the clock, which weighs several tonnes, was a free-standing item made for exhibition. The court was told that the clock was adapted to Naylor's specifications in 1855 and decorated to harmonise with its surroundings in the hall's entrance tower. The man who owned the hall when Mr Kennedy bought the pieces had it repossessed by the National Westminster Bank. The present owners, two Manchester metal brokers, are converting it into two large flats and an office.

Traffic offender banged to rites

A MOTORIST who angrily bumped another driver's car at a toll booth has been sentenced to attend church. An American court ordered Raymond Bachelor, 30, to worship regularly for three months after he was convicted of nudging the car of a woman who took a long time to find her handbag. The court is not yet convinced of Bachelor's conversion. The case was held last month and he was told to month and he was told to return with documentary proof that he had honoured his sentence. This week Bachelor presented a premature letter of "proof" to the court. It has been rejected. Tom Cuomo, the court administrator, said yesterday: "It had no letterhead and had very few details." The letter was signed by a Rev John Cantrell but no clergyman of that name appears to exist in the Newark area. "We're not too sure the letter is from a minister," Mr Cuomo said. "Anyone could have written it." At the original hearing at Saddle Brook Municipal Court, New Jersey, Judge Nicholas Nasarenko asked Bachelor: "Do you go to church?" Bachelor, of Newark, who faced jail or community service after being charged with criminal mis- chief, replied that he attended as frequently as he could. Judge Nasarenko said: "Well, your minister is going to find out who you are. You're going to be a regular visitor." The judge said that he wanted Bachelor to grasp the error of his ways and he hoped that by listening to a clergyman he might learn to control his temper. The American Civil Liberties Union criticised the sentence. Ed Martone, head of the union's local office, said that it was ludicrous and possibly unconstitutional to use religion as a sentence. "I'm sure most religious leaders don't think church is an alternative for jail," he said. Mr Cuomo said that Bachelor had appeared "very happy" when he heard the sentence. He was also fined \$455 (£305). It is not the first time that Mr Nasarenko, who is a Russian Orthodox, has handed down an imaginative sentence. In November 1994 he ordered a man to cut off his ponytail as a condition to dropping an assault charge. Last week a New York judge ruled that drugs suspects had a right to run away from police because officers were widely seen as "corrupt, abusive and violent."

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Michael Spindler
President and CEO
On behalf of Apple employees worldwide

e-mail address: AppleForever@apple.com

top job for
who sold C
double gla
Prime's TV firm
to produce life
Queen Mother

Royal troubleshooter promoted

Top job for man who sold Queen double glazing

By ALAN HAMILTON

MEN in grey suits are taking over the world. In Queen Anne's time, the Keeper of the Privy Purse was her favourite Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. From next August, the romantically titled post as head of the present Queen's money will go to a former senior partner in the accountancy firm KPMG.

Michael Peat, 46, has already made a brisk and bruising impression on the Queen's counting house during his four years as her director of finance, imposing savings and a degree of business efficiency hitherto unknown in the red-carpeted corridors of monarchy. The Queen yesterday announced his promotion to Keeper of the Privy Purse, Treasurer to the Queen, and Receiver General of the Duchy of Lancaster, the most senior financial post in the Royal Household.

When he takes over in August, Mr Peat will assume overall responsibility for the financial running of the Queen's household, her private estates, stables and studs. He succeeds Sir Shane Blewitt, 63, who is retiring and who came to the Royal Household after a career in the Irish Guards and the City. Day-to-day financial affairs will be handled by two deputies.

Mr Peat first worked for the Queen on secondment from the giant City accountancy firm founded by his father. His decision to join her full-time in 1990 coincided with the Royal Household taking over the annual £20 million budget for the occupied royal palaces from the Department of National Heritage.

He demonstrated how far the Royal Family has moved from the days of Queen Anne in February 1993 when he gave unprecedented television interviews explaining the Queen's decision to pay income tax. "The Queen is a very pragmatic person. I have to say that her expenditure is not

Police are investigating an accident involving the Duke of Edinburgh after a motorist reported whip-lash injuries. The Duke was driving a Range Rover, which hit a Mercedes that had stopped at a zebra crossing. The accident happened in Brandon, Suffolk, on Wednesday — the day after *The Sun* published part of a telephone call involving the Duke.

extravagant," he said. Since then Mr Peat has more than earned his £116,000 salary, plus performance bonus and an apartment in Kensington Palace, by making substantial savings. By installing double glazing, for example, he has saved more than £3 million over the past four years on the heating bill for Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle. His target is to reduce the annual maintenance costs of the palaces to £15 million by the year 2000.

Figures released on the orders of the Commons Public Accounts Committee last year show that Mr Peat managed to cut the Queen's electricity bill by 9 per cent on the previous year, her gas bill by 17 per cent and water charges by 53 per cent. The public opening of Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle produced £4 million towards the castle's restoration after the 1992 fire.

Mr Peat has also been busy with the Civil List, which provides an annual grant of £7.9 million to the Queen for her public duties and the running of her office. Since Mr Peat took over, the list has built up a surplus of £16.9 million, from which the taxpayers will benefit when the list is renegotiated for a further ten years in 2001.

The job, however, has brought its own problems for the low-profile financier. Labour MPs criticised

£400,000 which was spent on refurbishing the apartment before Mr Peat moved in. Buckingham Palace, however, pointed out that the Old Etonian contributed £430 a week towards the cost of the flat. Similar properties in the area, however, would fetch a weekly rent of £2,000.

In royal family finances, the big winner is still the Treasury. Total costs of monarchy, from the Queen's flowers to the Royal Yacht, are estimated at £50 million a year. Last year the Crown Estates, traditionally handed over to the Government at the beginning of each reign, delivered to the Chancellor of the Exchequer a profit of £84.8 million.

Some rising costs, however, have evaded even the cold unblinking eye of Mr Peat. Last year the cost of the Queen's congratulatory programs to centenarians rose from £40,000 to £101,000. Not even accountants can prevent people from living longer.



Sid Shaw in his shop. He is expanding into bedspreads, curtains and shirts

Presley trader keeps on rocking

THE first round of the fight between a small businessman and the Elvis Presley empire over who has the right to produce the singer's souvenirs ended yesterday with a victory for the entrepreneur.

The Trade Marks Registry, part of the Patent Office, based in London, provisionally allowed Sid Shaw to continue producing his *Are You Lonesome Tonight?* knickers, *Jailhouse Rock* ties and Presley soaps branded with a portrait of the "King". Jack Soden, chief executive of Elvis Presley Enterprises, had objected to Mr Shaw using the name Elvis in his "Elvisy Yours" merchandise. Mr Soden secured an injunction in 1987 preventing Mr Shaw from selling his souvenirs at Graceland, Presley's Memphis home.

Mr Shaw, who has a shop in Shoreditch, east London, argues that Elvis Presley Enterprises does not have sole rights to represent the singer. He has been fighting for the right to produce Presley memorabilia for 13 years. He said yesterday he would continue with his plan to expand into Presley curtains, bedspreads and shirts.

TOMORROW



Maxwell: Peter Jay's verdict

"His only success is the avoidance of disaster..."

So wrote Peter Jay in a memo to his successor after three and a half years as Robert Maxwell's "Chief of Staff". Read on tomorrow for Jay's recollections of the "pre-moral giant pachyderm" and his verdict on two new books on Maxwell's life and death.

ON THE BOOKS PAGE, ON SATURDAY



Michael Peat, a far cry from Queen Anne's days when the Keeper of the Privy Purse was a woman

Prince's TV firm to produce life of Queen Mother

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

PRINCE Edward's television production company, Ardent, is to make a £6 million dramatised biography of his grandmother, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, which will be shown on ITV next year.

The Prince has consulted his grandmother and received her permission for the eight-part series, which covers the period from her marriage to Prince Albert, Duke of York, in 1923 to the Coronation in 1953.

The actresses Jennifer Ehle, who starred in the BBC Television adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, and Helena Bonham Carter are being considered for the central role of the Queen Mother, which has provisionally been entitled *Century*.

A spokeswoman for Ardent said that although the Prince would have no direct editorial involvement in the production, "it would be daft to say he has not had influence in the early stages."

"The Royal Family will not be shown scripts for the serial. It will be a very dramatic account of the Queen Mother's early life. We won't just trawl through the history. The Queen Mother is a well-loved figure and it will be a fascinating story," she said.

Vernon Lawrence, managing director of MAI Produc-

tions, which has commissioned the programme for ITV, said: "The series will cover one of the most fascinating periods in our recent history, seen through the life of the Queen Mother."

"Her place and influence on the great events of this century have never been fully appreciated."

The series will be scripted by Julian Bond, 65, whose work includes the screenplays for the films *The Whistle Blower* and *The Shooting Party*.

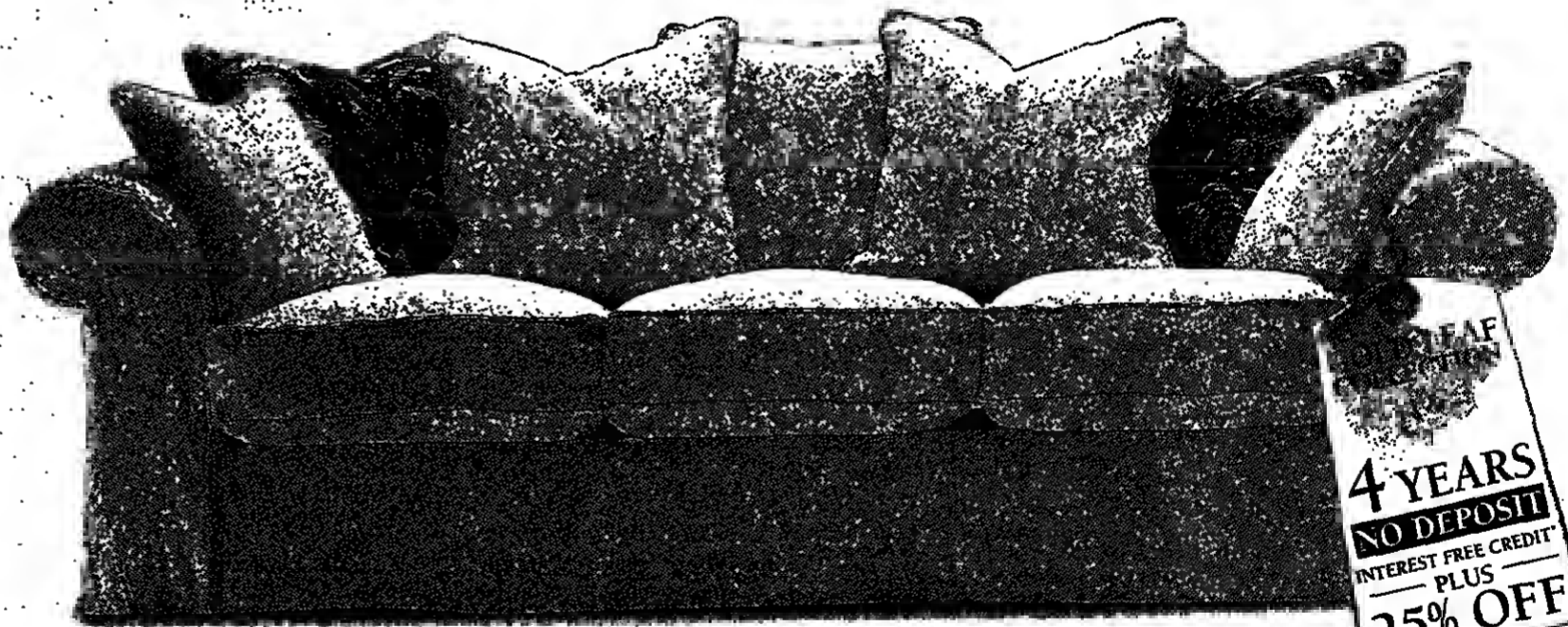
A Buckingham Palace spokesman said: "The Queen Mother and the Queen have been informed and have agreed to the project."

The programme will be the Prince's second important project about his own family. Ardent Productions has already made a two-part documentary about Edward VIII, called *Edward on Edward*. The programme will be shown later this spring to coincide with the sixtieth anniversary of his abdication.

Ardent's first drama production, *Annie's Bar*, a political soap set in the tearoom in the House of Commons that deals with politicians' passions and peccadilloes, had its first showing on Channel 4 last night.

Matthew Bond, page 39

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Devalued investments provoke funding crisis

Worshippers to be asked for 5 per cent of earnings

By RUSSELL JENKINS

THE Anglican Church's 1.5 million regular attenders will be expected to dig deeper in their pockets to fund the clergy's pensions under proposals to go before the General Synod next week. Senior churchmen spoke yesterday of encouraging congregations to give 5 per cent of their earnings when the collection plate is passed around in Sunday services. On average parishioners will be asked to pay an extra £150 a week to fund the £30 million a year needed to meet pension costs from 1998. Each diocese will be expected to raise its share from parishioners. They promise that the impact will be cushioned as the new pension arrangements will be phased in for up to six years. The problem of clergy pensions has been looming since the 95 Church Commissioners, who manage assets of £2.4 billion, lost £800 million in investments devalued after the 1980s property boom. When the commissioners assumed responsibility for funding pensions in 1954, they absorbed 7 per cent of income. That figure had risen to half the income by last year and is likely to swallow the entire income by 2010. The synod will be asked to set up a pension fund, financed by contributions from dioceses and parishes and administered by a board of trustees. The Church Commissioners, who contributed £73.9 million towards pensions in 1994, will continue to guarantee payments to existing pensioners and commitments to clergy until a cut-off point - probably April 1998. Vicars now face the task of selling the new policy to dwindling congregations who are already concerned at the way a significant part of the

Parishioners have been told that £20,000 they donated to repair their church tower is missing. The discrepancy came to light when the parish church council accounts for St Weonards, the name of the church and the village in Hereford and Worcester, were examined after Ben Durham, the treasurer, died suddenly in December. Police are investigating whether a crime has been committed.

Church's fortune was squandered in the late 1980s. Philip Mawer, the synod's general secretary, said: "They [parishioners] will be asked to pay more but it is not absolutely clear how much more. The debate is between the aspirations of the clergy and affordability." There are 11,000 clergy pensioners and

their widows, outnumbering the 10,500 working clergy. The standard pension, of two thirds of the previous year's national minimum stipend, stands at £8,400. When a clergyman retires, he can expect to receive the standard pension plus a lump sum of £25,200. Archbishops can expect twice the basic rate, diocesan bishops 1 1/2 times the basic rate and suffragan bishops, deans, provosts and archdeacons 1 1/4 times the basic rate.

The pensions are linked to stipends, which have been rising faster than average earnings during the past decade. The Pensions Board, under pressure to make cuts, is scheduled to present its proposals next summer. One option is to link pensions to inflation.

The synod will also discuss the implications of the Turnbull Report, which sets out the biggest organisational upheaval in the Church of England for centuries. The recommendations, which effectively put the Archbishop of Canterbury at the head of a business-style management structure, have been widely criticised for concentrating power within the Church at the top. A White Paper drawn up by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in consultation with the synod's standing committee has made modifications to appease the hard-line critics. It recommends that the National Council, the proposed engine house of the Church, should be called the Archbishop's Council. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York would become joint Presidents of the Council and fewer bishops would act as "executive chairmen" on the council. The paper also emphasises the continuing importance of the General Synod.

Churches set up inquiry into immigration Bill

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY

MICHAEL HOWARD faces a fresh confrontation with the judiciary as a high-level inquiry is opened to examine his asylum and immigration proposals.

Senior religious leaders have worked with lawyers, charities and immigration welfare groups to set up a wide-ranging investigation of government plans to curb the rights of asylum seekers. The Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland is the main mover behind the independent public inquiry. It is likely to bring the Home Secretary into direct conflict

with one of the country's most senior former judges, who is chairing the inquiry. Sir Iain Gidewell, who retired last year as a lord justice of appeal, is to chair a panel taking evidence from a wide range of organisations on the principles and practical implications of the Asylum and Immigration Bill. Mr Howard and senior Home Office officials will have the opportunity to give evidence to the panel during the coming month. The move to expose the Bill to detailed examination will re-ignite the controversy surrounding the Government's refusal to set up a special standing committee

to analyse the legislation. Ministers have said the Bill is aimed at reducing the number of people making bogus applications for asylum in Britain. The inquiry is expected to report before Easter, in advance of the Bill completing its passage through the Lords. New rules limiting the rights of asylum seekers to claim state benefits will be introduced next week. Among other panel members are Rabbi Julia Neuberger, Dr David Say, assistant bishop of Canterbury, and Ranjit Sondhi, former deputy chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality.

Clergy seek showdown with dean

By RUSSELL JENKINS



The Dean of Lincoln: asked by bishop to go

CLERGY in the diocese have called a meeting with Lincoln Cathedral clerics next week to try to resolve the long-running public dispute between senior staff.

About 50 canons in the diocese intend to confront the dean, the Very Rev Brandon Jackson, about his future in the cathedral. Canon Raymond Rodger, personal assistant to the bishop, the Right Rev Robert Hardy, said: "There is a groundswell of festering dissatisfaction in the diocese about what is happening. This meeting was called by the

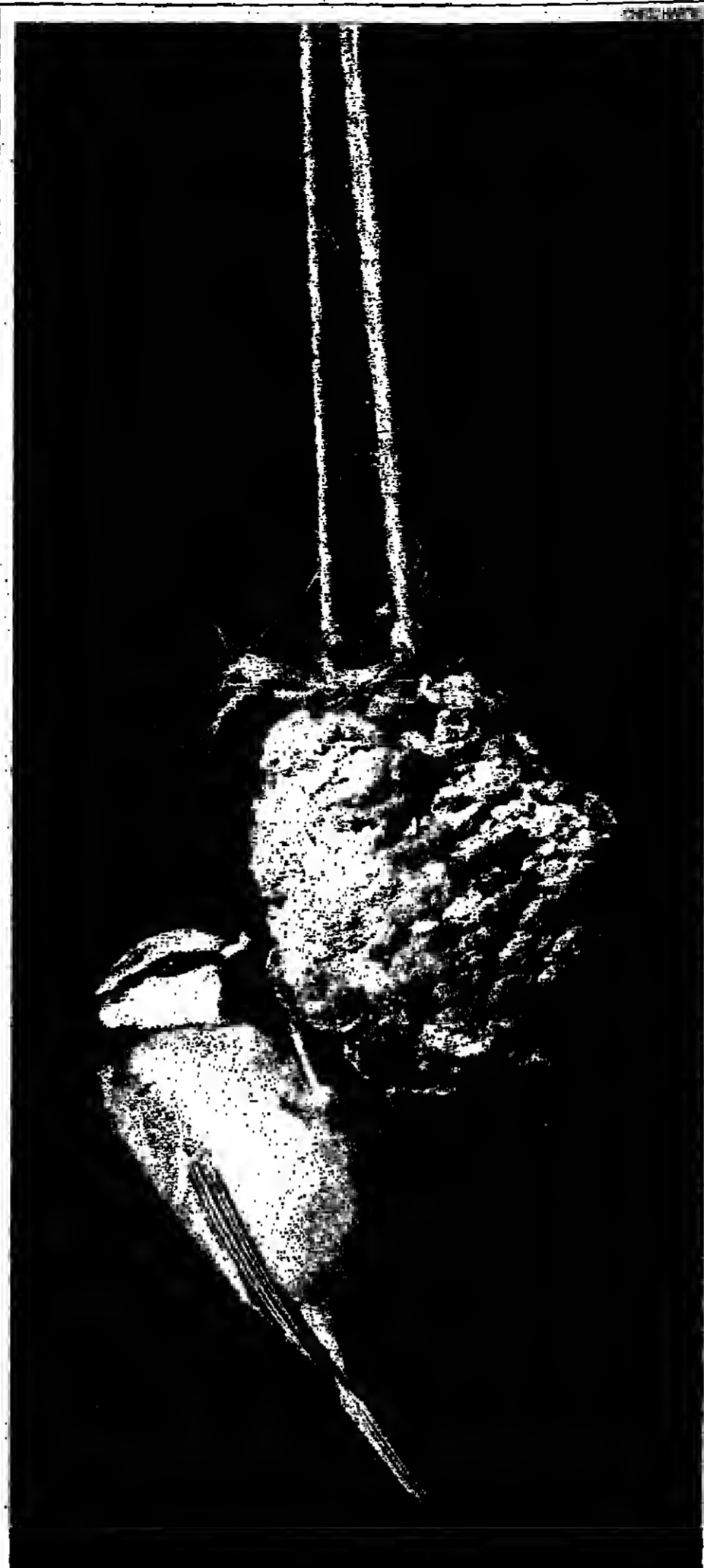
canons because they want to express their feelings about matters at the cathedral and they want an opportunity to speak their minds to the dean and chapter."

The row goes back to a loss-making exhibition of the cathedral's Magna Carta in Australia in the late 1980s. It was exacerbated last summer when Dr Jackson, 60, was acquitted in a church custody court of sexual misconduct with a former cathedral vergier, Verity Freestone, 31.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, became so alarmed at the dispute late last year that he sent two representatives to

hear the views of the factions. Cathedral staff made clear then that they no longer had confidence in the dean's leadership. Afterwards the bishop called for his resignation, saying relationships with staff were "past reconciliation".

There is likely to be further damage done to the Church's reputation when Ms Freestone takes her claim against the dean and chapter for unfair dismissal and sexual harassment to an industrial tribunal. One canon said: "The [the canons] are sick and tired of what is going on and they feel something needs to be done. I also sense there is very little support for the dean."



A blue tit tucks into fat-coated scraps at the Islington Ecology Centre in London

Bird lovers learn the fats of life

GARDEN birds struggling to survive the freezing weather could be thrown a lifeline by householders who pour their cooking fat down the sink. Water bosses are

appealing to cooks to mix the melted fat from the Sunday roast with seeds, dried fruit and scraps and put it out for the birds. When cooled, it can be hung in the garden,

providing vital nourishment in the cold spell. Every year 100 tons of fat are poured into the drainage system in the Thames area, blocking the pipes in 6,500 homes.

'Rioters' called for chicken curries

Prisoners involved in one of Scotland's worst jail riots stopped petrol bombing prison officers and smashing up furniture to ask negotiators for 22 chicken curries, a court was told yesterday.

The High Court in Stirling heard that rioters held a prison officer hostage and had threatened to stab him during a violent siege at Glenochil prison near Alloa.

Paul McGuigan, 31, a prison officer, said one of the two demands was for chicken curries for the 22 men in the wing. The trial of eight men, who deny rioting, continues.

Murder charge

Mark Weston, 21, of Ascot-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire, will appear before magistrates at Witney today charged with the murder of Vikki Thompson, 30, who lived in the same village. The mother of two died in August, six days after she was found badly beaten in woodland where she had been walking her dog.

Shutting up shop

Jim Heritage, 37, of Coventry, who has been prosecuted 40 times and jailed on ten occasions for shoplifting, was banned from all Tesco supermarkets in England and Wales. He consented to the injunction, which Tesco had sought at the High Court. "Where can I go now?" asked the divorced father of two, who is banned from his local shops.

Taxing task

A committee of senior judges, MPs and other public figures are to investigate ways of curbing tax avoidance, under the auspices of the Institute of Fiscal Studies. Lord Justice Millett and Mr Justice Carnwath, both experts in the field, have been asked to join the committee, which already includes Lords Nolan and Templeman, law lords.

Bomb made safe

A Second World War German bomb found in a lake in South Norwood, London, was made safe after a controlled explosion by army experts yesterday. Railtrack stopped trains in the area between Sam and 9am. Residents spent the night in a nearby sports centre after the 100lb bomb was found by a park keeper.

Case collapses

The case against three Manchester men accused of killing a football fan in a brawl outside a pub in Walsall, West Midlands, collapsed. Ian Gillespie, the Walsall stipendiary magistrate, decided that Neil and Ian Spence and Steven Rimmer had no case to answer. They had been accused of manslaughter and violent disorder.

Phone alert

Islington council is proposing to issue roadworkers in the King's Cross area with mobile telephones so they can make emergency calls if they are attacked. But some suggested the phones would attract muggers. One worker said: "If I was getting mugged, a mobile phone would be the first thing I would hand over." The council would not comment.

Red-handed

Surgeries and hospitals in the Thames Valley area were warned to be on the alert yesterday for a burglar who lost a finger during a break-in when he was attacked by a greyhound. Police were unable to take prints after the incident in Cornhillbury, Milton Keynes, because the dog ate the finger while his owner was dialling 999.

NHS 'ignoring the plight of osteoporosis victims'

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

MORE than half the health authorities in the United Kingdom are ignoring government advice on the crippling bone disease osteoporosis, specialists said yesterday. Lives are being put at risk and thousands of people suffering unnecessarily because of the failure to implement guidelines on treatment and prevention issued a year ago by the Government's Chief Medical Officer, Sir Kenneth Calman, the National Osteoporosis Society said.

A national survey by the society showed that more than half of health authorities had made no plans to open specialist osteoporosis clinics for the one in three women and one in 12 men affected. More than

one in ten authorities admitted they were doing nothing.

The cost of a basic osteoporosis service is estimated at £50,000 in each health district, less than the cost of caring for two weeks' hip fractures. Linda Edwards, the society's director, said: "Lack of action is condemning thousands of men and women to a life destroyed by fractures, pain and deformity because they are being denied the basic right to early diagnosis and effective treatment. Hundreds of thousands of people could avoid the disease if they received better advice on prevention and earlier treatment. It is grossly unfair that, because you live in one district and not another, your friends may be

getting help on the NHS while you receive no help or must travel hundreds of miles to obtain private treatment."

Osteoporosis is caused by loss of protein from bones, which become thin and brittle and fracture easily. Hormonal changes at the menopause make women especially vulnerable. The condition can be treated with drugs to slow or stop bone loss provided it is detected early enough. This can be done by a bone scan to measure the patient's bone density.

The health department guidelines recommended that health districts provide at least 600 bone scans a year. Only one health authority in eight is meeting this minimum.

Gentle wardens anger traders

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

TRAFFIC wardens in the old Devon port of Topsham have been accused of being too kind to motorists who ignore the parking restrictions. Shopkeepers claim the narrow streets are clogged because the two part-time wardens are not made of the right stuff when dealing with drivers they know in the closely knit town.

Instead of reaching po-faced for their ticket pads like the dean of their breed, they have allegedly sought out offending motorists in nearby shops and given them a chance to move their cars rather than pay the £20 fine.

One shopkeeper said: "The trouble is that people in Topsham are just plain lazy and they hate walking any-

where. There are perfectly good car parks but people will not use them. They prefer to park illegally outside the shops. Our wardens could win a prize as the kindest in the world."

Mary Evans, a Tory councillor on Exeter City Council, who lives in Topsham, said: "It is very difficult as one of them lives in the town and knows everyone. They do hand-out tickets but they always do it with a smile on their face."

Inspector John Fulman of Exeter police said: "It is difficult for wardens if they are working in a small town rather than a city. Often a word in an ear is better than handing out tickets."

British bat follows wolf into dark night of extinction

By MICHAEL HORSNELL, COUNTRYSIDE CORRESPONDENT

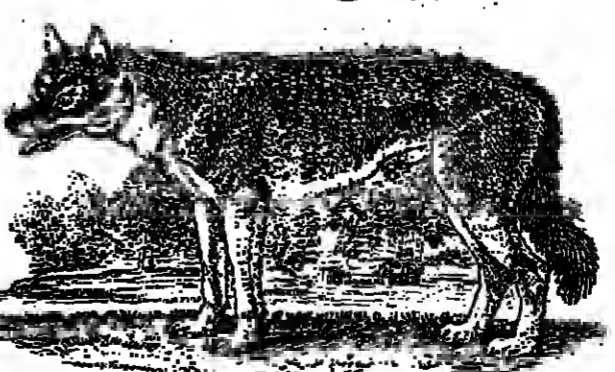
BRITAIN'S mouse-eared bat, which has not been seen for five years, is believed by wildlife experts to be extinct - the first British mammal to have suffered that fate since the wolf in 1745.

Several others of the 15 native bat species are rare and may be endangered. Conservationists are to carry out the first census of the dwindling bat population with the aid of a £500,000 grant from the Environment Department.

Colin Catto, scientific officer of the Bat Conservation Trust, said: "Bats are an integral part of Britain's ecology. They are not pests and



The mouse-eared bat has not been seen for five years. The wolf was the last British mammal to vanish, in 1745



they are not rodents. A lot of people form their impressions from horror movies and associate bats with dark imagery and evil. They need lots of positive PR. We think there

are no more than 4,000 greater horseshoe bats left and we also know that Bechstein's bat and the barbastelle bat, both woodland species, are extremely rare." The trust will

conduct the survey over five years with the help of 93 volunteer bat groups. The operation will involve a painstaking count of hibernation sites and summer roosting

places, often in old buildings and hollow trees. "We will also be carrying out field surveys using detectors which can pick up the ultrasonic signals emitted by bats." Mr

Advertisement for a service offering international calls at low rates. Text includes: 'AT THESE PRICES DISTANT RELATIVES NEEDN'T BE SO DISTANT.', a table of rates for various countries, and contact information: 'FREEPHONE 0800 376 66 66'. The table shows rates for USA, India, South Africa, Hong Kong, Japan, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany/France, and Israel.

Vertical text on the right edge of the page, including 'Police dig after 10 yr Bible John' and 'Calmer seas view cheaper catches'.

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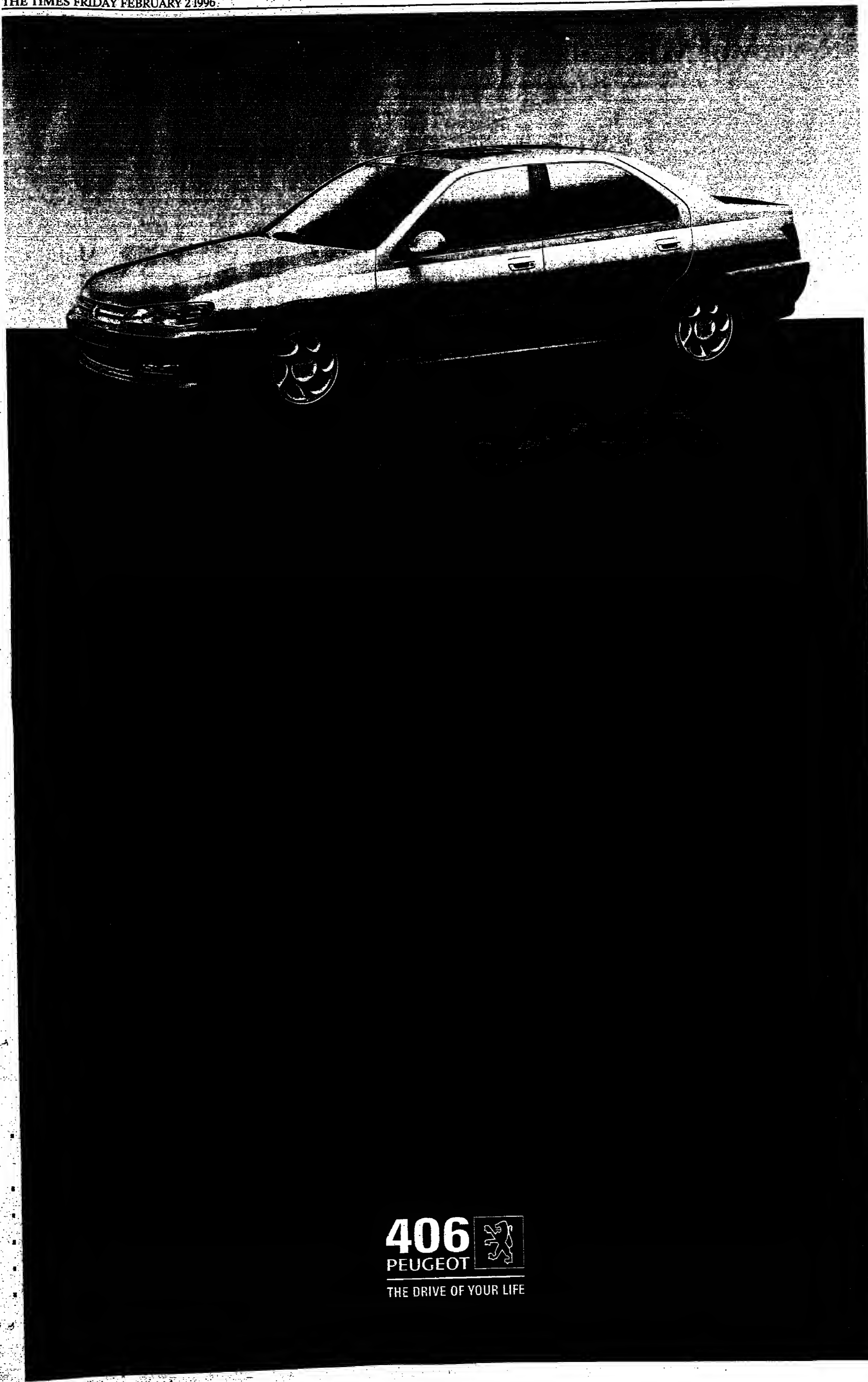
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Review of MPs' salaries answers only part of the problem

The debate about MPs' pay is much broader than review bodies, or even salary levels. It is about what sort of MPs we want. The Government's intention to refer the issue to an independent organisation with very tight terms of reference like the Senior Salaries Review Body can therefore only answer part of the problem. At most, it will create a new, and probably cumbersome, mechanism for fixing MPs' pay and pensions. But it cannot address the real reason why Parliament is held in such low esteem and why there has been such a public outcry this

week about even calls for a big pay rise. There is no agreement about the role of MPs. At one extreme is the High Tory view that being an MP is a public service, on top of people's existing business and other interests. Therefore, MPs should either receive nothing or merely an allowance in no way related to salary levels elsewhere. This only worked in a world, which disappeared half a century ago, when being an MP was only demanding for part of the year and most MPs either had a substantial income from investments or were

paid union officials. But this is now hopelessly out of date and would limit membership of the Commons to millionaires and monks. It also ignores MPs' growing burden of work, both in the Commons itself and, particularly, from constituents. But most MPs who have outside interests also spend a full week on their parliamentary activities. At the other extreme is the Labour Left view that MPs should

be full-time members of the Commons with outside interests forbidden. But this risks a further expansion of the caste of full-time professional politicians with little outside experience, thus narrowing the political class even more. What is needed is a better balance of full-time politicians and those who switch in mid-career and become MPs, spending two or three terms in the Commons. MPs should be allowed outside interests, provided these are separate from membership of the Commons. Salaries should be set at a level sufficient to attract people of

talent and established careers in their late 30s and 40s who often have heavy family responsibilities. Almost no one becomes an MP to make money but their pay should be well above the current £34,000 a year, which is below the earnings of many officials of the Commons, let alone most political journalists. It is mischievous to add the allowance for office and secretarial expenses to suggest that MPs can earn up to £100,000 a year. Some MPs probably do abuse the system, though more have to meet some of their office costs from their basic salary. It would be better to

separate the two items entirely. There is an even more urgent case for higher salaries for ministers. But at some stage the Commons is going to have to go beyond merely financial calculations to examine whether we need as many MPs as we now have. Over the past few months, there have been a number of calls, in newspapers and from retiring MPs, notably Douglas Hurd, for a reduction in the size of the Commons. David Butler, the dean of British political scientists, argues in his foreword to the 1996 edition of the Hansard Society's *Parliament and Govern-*

ment Pocket Book that the number of MPs (currently 65) and due to rise to 69 after the election) should be reduced to, say, 50. Many would argue that the size of the executive should also be cut. This could be part of a package, including also the Nolan proposals and higher pay. There is scant chance of this happening unless there are much more radical constitutional reforms. But this is the only way that sizeable pay increases are likely to be politically acceptable and saleable.

PETER RIDDELL

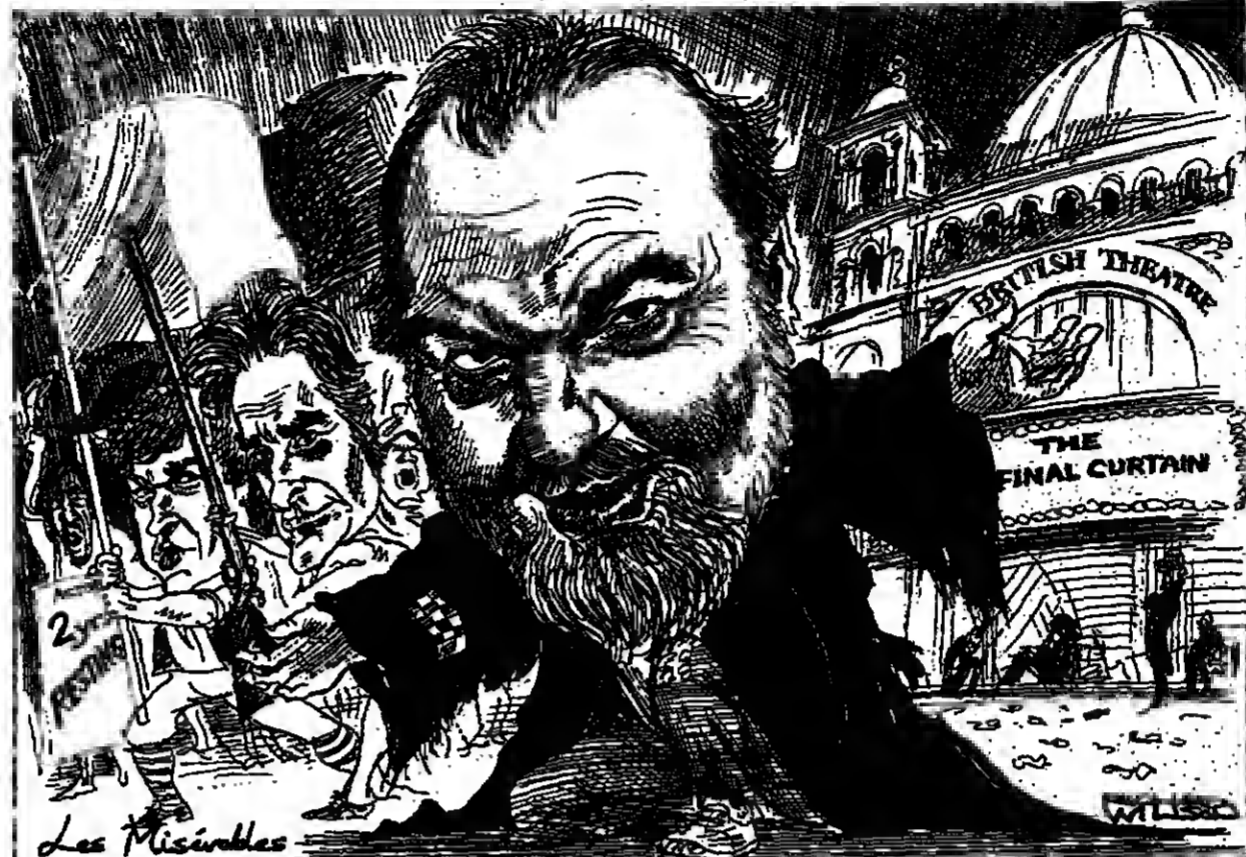
Harman is facing revolt by local party activists

By ANOREW PIERCE

THE row over Harriet Harman's decision to send her son to a selective grammar school provoked calls for her resignation from members of her constituency party last night. Emergency motions calling on her to "step down from her national leadership roles" were tabled in three out of the nine branches of Camberwell and Peckham Labour Party. The motions were not included on the agenda of last night's branch annual meetings because they were not tabled within the designated nine day period. The MPs' local party critics denounced this as an attempt to silence criticism and debate. Despite the procedural manoeuvring of the Shadow Health Secretary's small but vocal band of critics, the party leadership was struggling to contain a growing constituency revolt. Ms Harman, who was not present at any of last night's meetings, will have to face the fury of the 760-strong local party at its annual meeting at Southwark town hall in two weeks. Yesterday feelings were running high in the south London constituency, which is one of the poorest boroughs in Britain. In some wards unemployment is as high as 35 per cent. The row over the school has

brought to the surface long-standing resentment towards the MP from the left wing of the local party. But her position as MP, having been re-elected unopposed by more than two thirds of the association last summer, is not in jeopardy. Some of her critics have dubbed her "two-minute Harman" in a barbed reference to the amount of time she spends at some constituency functions. Vincent Feiner, a Peckham Labour councillor and school governor, said: "We cannot be dismissed as a minority of malcontents. There is a huge furor within the local party. She should stand down from the front bench. As a governor of a local school I have to decide within two weeks whether to support grant-maintained status. I have written to Harriet Harman to seek her advice. I have had no reply. She has broken party policy and given a gift to the Tories." Ian Driver, a councillor, said: "There is a wave of anger in the constituency. She should resign as a member of the Shadow Cabinet." Miss Harman has made enemies in her own backyard for moving out of the constituency and into the neighbouring and far more fashionable Dulwich. Her enemies say that Simon Hughes, the

Liberal Democrat MP for neighbouring Bermondsey, has a higher profile in the area. Mr Hughes, for example, is a frequent attendee of the local police liaison committee. Miss Harman is not. Tom Rowing, an officer of the Brunswick branch of the party, said: "Party members are angry with her. I do not want to do the Tories' dirty work for her so I would support her in any vote. I am in a minority. Most people I have spoken to are furious with her. I only hope that time will heal." John Friary, a Labour councillor who is secretary of the Brunswick branch, said: "Harriet Harman has underestimated her local party. She has breached party policy and exposed us to a Tory attack. She should have resigned from the Labour front bench." Clare Cozens, chairman of the local Labour party, accused a minority of malcontents of causing trouble for Ms Harman. "They are not happy with Harriet Harman as MP but their views are not representative of the broad thrust of the local party." Ms Cozens denied that criticism was being stifled. "The emergency motions arrived too late to be included on any agenda. I am not against debate. But I cannot tolerate breaches of the rules."



Theatre's best perform tragedy for sceptical Commons audience

By DALVA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

THE heavyweights of British theatre appeared at the House of Commons yesterday to plead with MPs for better arts funding. An all-star cast gave evidence to the Heritage Select Committee, whose latest study covers the funding of the performing arts. They included the director Sir

Peter Hall, Adrian Noble, artistic director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Richard Eyre, director of the Royal National Theatre, and the impresario Sir Cameron Mackintosh. Sir Peter attacked the Government, saying that its dwindling subsidy of the performing arts was allowing serious theatre to die. West End theatre would follow the example of Broadway in offering only "plastic musicals" for tourists. He said that there were almost no plays on Broadway, and theatres that once staged them were now dark. In Britain, he said, every subsidised arts organisation had been "reduced to the bone", ticket-prices were dangerously high and there was no investment in the talent of the future. Cuts over the past

decade had increasingly hit the regional theatres where young actors learnt their trade. High prices were deterring young theatre-goers. "At 14, I was able to practically live in the theatre on no money at all," he said. He launched the demise of theatre-in-education schemes, saying "I worry over the schoolchildren who can no longer afford to go to the theatre because there is no money in local authorities." Sir Cameron said: "Where are the new people going to be to replace us when we come to the end of our self-date?" Mr Eyre sounded a note of despair after listening to Joe Ashton (Lab, Bassetlaw), who castigated the RNT and the RSC for not trying harder to secure business sponsorship.

The MP wanted to know why theatres did not follow the sports example of displaying sponsors' names on stadiums and clothing. Mr Eyre retorted: "Of course it doesn't happen. Football gets shown on TV. Theatre is seen by a small audience and is untelevised." Mr Eyre expressed concern that 99 per cent of the country, including politicians, assumed that the lottery had endowed the arts with an "extraordinary fountain of riches" and that any funding problem must have been cured. In fact, the lottery had made it more difficult to argue their case. "We appear to be whingeing." He called for the Government to change the rules that restrict lottery money to capital projects.

Major is expected to call pay inquiry

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

THE Government sought to defuse the row over MPs' salaries yesterday by taking the first steps towards an independent inquiry. If the Opposition parties agree in talks over the next few days, the Senior Salaries Review Body, which decides the pay rates for judges, army officers and senior civil servants, will be asked to investigate MPs' pay. Senior government sources predicted a "substantial" inquiry. But leading figures in both the main parties agreed that if the review results in big increases in the salaries of ministers and MPs it should ideally be dealt with before the general election. The Cabinet decided yesterday that the increasingly embarrassing clamour over pay should be handled speedily. Demands from more than 300 MPs for an inquiry that some hope will lead to a doubling of their £34,000 salary have been denounced as insensitive by low pay and poverty pressure groups. In the Commons John Major said that a "new mechanism" for determining the pay of MPs was required. The present link with the Civil Service has been made redundant because of a restructuring of salaries. Labour had backed the call of the Commons motion for the issue to be handled by the Nolan committee. But members of the committee appear reluctant to take on the task and the Cabinet is thought to prefer the Senior Salaries Review Body because it already has within its terms of reference power to consider MPs' pay. The decision to move speedily came as it was revealed that more than a million public sector workers would have to settle for rises of about 4 per cent. A formal announcement on the inquiry is expected next week.

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Tory MP's widow is favourite to fight his seat

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

THE battle for South East Staffordshire begins tonight when local Tories select their candidate for the forthcoming by-election. The party faithful in this Middle England heartland will gather at the Masonic Hall in Tamworth to choose a replacement for Sir David Lighthow, the sitting MP who died last December. Sir David's widow, Anne, has reached the final shortlist of three and is favourite to win. Lady Lighthow, a 57-year-old former teacher, is popular and many Tories hope she will carry on where her larger-than-life husband left off. Although no date has been fixed, the poll is expected to take place next month. With a Tory majority of just 7,192, Labour is clear favourite to win the seat. The party already controls both councils in the constituency. But local Tories hope the new-found confidence of their MPs at Westminster will encourage traditional but wavering supporters in Tamworth. Many Tories know they have a slim chance of achieving what would be the first by-election victory for the government since William Hague, the Welsh Secretary, won Richmond in 1989. Although the Tory majority in Staffordshire South East dropped by 3,000 at the last election, the

party's actual share of the vote went up. Tamworth Tories are also well aware of their market town's place in history as the birthplace of modern Conservatism. Sir Robert Peel's Tamworth address in December 1834 united a divided Tory party and set the stage for a revival of party fortunes. Ron Cook, the Tory party chairman, is convinced history will repeat itself and Tamworth will become a benchmark for a new era of Tory popularity. "The feel-good factor has returned to the party in Staffordshire South East," he said. "We will use this by-election as a springboard to win the next election." However, the Labour candidate, Brian Jenkins, 53, leader of Tamworth Borough Council, says he is convinced that dissatisfaction over Tory tax rises and job insecurity will swing voters towards Labour. Six of the 25 or so Tory MPs who are seeking safer seats to fight at the general election have been shortlisted for Bury St Edmunds and will be interviewed this weekend. They are Robert Banks, Harrogate; Nicholas Hawkins, Blackpool South; Michael Stephen, Shoreham; Dame Janet Fookes, Plymouth Drake; John Watts, Slough; and Richard Spring, who was MP for the old constituency.

IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY in the Commons questions to agriculture ministers and the Prime Minister followed by debates on the Royal Navy and Coventry fire station. In the Lords: Criminal Procedure and Investigation Bill 56, report; Number 6 (Debat)

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ARTS 29-31
The musical that's all in the worst possible taste



EDUCATION 33
Why universities are planning a £300 student levy



SPORT 34-40
Clement Freud on South Africa's grand finale

TELEVISION AND RADIO
Pages 38,39

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 2 1996

Insurer aims to become £500m limited company

PPP to abandon provident status

BY PATRICIA TESHAN AND ROBERT MILLER

PPP, the private healthcare insurance group, is poised to announce plans to shed its provident status and become a limited company valued at an estimated £500 million.

The move, which could be announced as early as next week, is understood to be part of an attempt to maintain market share in an increasingly competitive market. It will provide greater flexibility in capital raising and could pave the way for another firm to

take a significant share stake or for a stock market flotation. As a provident association, which traces its roots back to 1938, PPP is not technically owned by anybody. It is a company limited by guarantee. In its present structure it has a 13-strong board of directors who run the business and sit on a board of 26 appointed governing members of Royal Medical Colleges, the British Medical Association, and independent lawyers and accountants. The members' governing board provides a

guarantee, but their liability is limited to one guinea each. This structure makes it difficult for the firm to raise capital or consider joint ventures. PPP is thought to be about to create a trust vehicle that will own the company. This would enable it to meet corporate governance standards, to have greater flexibility for access to capital for acquisitions and to issue new shares that could be sold to a third party. Those thought likely to be interested include Abbey National, Legal & General and other insurers or building societies.

Last autumn PPP relaunched itself with a £30 million advertising campaign, a new corporate identity and a new range of products. It also changed its name from Private Patients Plan to PPP healthcare group, to reflect a mix of products. The decision to change its structure follows an 18-month review of its business and strategy. For the past year this has been led by Peter Owen, a former British Airways senior executive, who came in as chief executive with the brief of turning PPP into a market-

ing-led organisation and to increase low consumer awareness of the company. PPP is the UK's second biggest private medical insurer with a 27 per cent share. In 1994 its pre-tax surplus was £25.3 million, down from £39.9 million, after reorganisation costs. Net assets were £300 million. The new company would be valued at a premium to its net asset value, or an estimated £500 million. Bupa, which is also a provident association, has a 45 per cent share of the market. Bupa and PPP have been

tempting to increase its market share. The need for increased access to capital was behind Norwich Union's decision to seek a stock market flotation next year. Guardian, the composite insurer, last year started to sell basic private health policies by telephone. Nationwide last month announced changes aimed at reducing its dependence on traditional mortgage related products. These included the sale by Nationwide Life of a permanent health insurance policy bought in from PPP.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FT-SE 100	3722.8	(-6.5)
Yield	3.22%	
FT-SE All share	1940.21	(-1.75)
Nikkei	20938.12	(+122.38)
New York	5377.24	(-18.05)
Dow Jones	635.42	(-0.63)
S&P Composite		

US RATE

Federal Funds	5.75%	(5.75%)
Long Bond	111 1/8%	(111 1/8%)
Yield	6.03%	(6.03%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month interbank	6 3/4%	(6 3/4%)
Life long gilt		
future (Mar)	110 1/8%	(110 1/8%)

STERLING

New York	1.5138*	(1.5130)
London		
DM	1.5138	(1.5110)
DM	2.2895	(2.2482)
FF	7.7610	(7.7178)
SF	1.8489	(1.8287)
Yen	162.68	(161.54)
£ Index	83.6	(83.3)

DOLLAR

London		
DM	1.4933*	(1.4888)
DM	5.1233*	(5.1045)
SF	1.2182*	(1.2115)
Yen	107.04*	(107.02)
£ Index	86.7	(86.8)

Tokyo close Yen 167.83

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Apr)	£16.25 (\$18.15)
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GOLD

London close	\$410.35 (\$405.75)
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* denotes midday trading price

British Coal forced into retreat over pensions sale

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

BRITISH COAL has been forced to halt the sale of its company that manages pensions worth £17 billion for miners and staff, after trustees derided plans for Friends Provident to buy the business. British Coal said it was disappointed that the sale had been "scuppered" after some trustees on the two pension funds — one for miners and one for staff — objected because they feared job losses at CINMAN, the management company, and because they wanted the funds managed in a more hands-off manner.

It would have largely backed CINMAN from a distance and left its asset management staff intact. The Friends Provident proposal involved substantial economies of scale and undoubtedly would have led to job losses. British Coal said it had a duty to realise the optimum for its assets, once quality thresholds were passed. But a sale of the pension-management business requires the consent of all trustees. A spokesman added that the timetable for disposal, which had originally been set for the end of January on the hopes of securing a sale to Friends Provident, was flexible. He did not rule out continuing the sale past the deadline for British Coal to quit its London headquarters in July. A source close to the trustees said they were sifting through options, and may make a recommendation very shortly. Friends Provident would include inviting Sal Oppenheim back into the action and also drumming up support for a management buyout. However, if the trustees staged a buyout they would look to sell on the business within a couple of years, he added. British Coal sold CINMAN, its venture capital business, to a management buyout after looking for an external buyer. However, although a buyout is being considered it is thought to be second to winning the backing of a hands-off financial backer without an asset-management arm. Friends Provident said yesterday that it would not submit further proposals.



Riding high at half-time and ahead of expectations, Kevin Lomax at Misys

Shares jump as Misys springs profits surprise

BY MARTIN BARROW

SHARES in Misys rose almost 10 per cent yesterday after the software company reported an increase in half-year profits to £19.2 million before tax from £11.2 million. The shares ended 62p higher at 637p as analysts reassessed forecasts for the full year. The results, covering the six months to November 30, are the first to include a full contribution from ACT, a software company acquired by Misys last year for £193 million. Kevin Lomax, chairman of Misys, said the results were ahead of the company's own expectations and reflected a particularly strong contribution from the enlarged banking division. "The pattern of trading is developing as expected and should result in a stronger bias towards the second half than normal," said Mr Lomax. Assimilation of the former ACT businesses was now substantially complete.

Group revenues increased to £129.5 million from £63.9 million. Most of the increase came from the addition of the ACT banking businesses to existing banking operations, where sales increased to £64.3 million from £15.7 million. Mr Lomax said the worldwide consolidation was underway in the applications software products industry would provide further opportunities to expand internationally. The level of borrowings was reduced to £5.9 million from £12.4 million during the first half, leaving the company well-placed to consider bolt-on acquisitions. The banking division expects to benefit from growth in demand from emerging economies. The interim dividend is increased to 3.97p a share from 3.45p, payable April 4. Earnings were 16.9p a share, rising from 16.2p. *Tempus, page 24*

Facia and Sears find a fit

BY SARAH BAGNALL

STEPHEN Hinchliffe, the Sheffield businessman, is about to expand his retail empire early next week with the purchase of Saxe and Curtiss, two high street shoe chains owned by Sears. The deal will come less than a month after Sears publicly revealed the chains were up for sale. Liam Strong, Sears chief executive, said the company had decided to sell its 111 Saxe and 124 Curtiss stores and that if no deal materialised relatively quickly, then the stores would be closed with the loss of 1,700 jobs. In the space of two years Mr Hinchliffe — dubbed king of the high street in Sheffield — has built from scratch one of the biggest privately owned retail companies in the country. This deal will be the second between Facia, Mr Hinchliffe's company, and Sears. Last August, Facia acquired 245 shoe shops in the Freeman Hardy Willis, Traform and Manfield chains from Sears. These joined Mr Hinchliffe's string of existing businesses, including Sock Shop, Salisbury, the handbag business, Tort, the costume jewellery chain, and Red or Dead, the fashion and footwear company.

Production falls to three-year low

BY JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

PRODUCTION from British manufacturers hit a three-year low in January, leading to the first decline in manufacturing employment for two years, according to the latest survey from the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply. However, there was a glimmer of better times ahead with news of a rise in orders and separate figures suggesting that British exporters are performing reasonably well in the face of the severe economic slowdown in continental Europe. Britain's trade deficit narrowed to its lowest level for eight months, in November, falling to £567 million from £1.63 billion in October, according to the Central Statistical Office. One key to both sets of statistics is the continuing effect of last year's huge build-up of stocks as demand tailed off sharply. Yesterday's fig-

Seasonal surge in consumer credit

BY OUR ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

CREDIT card borrowing soared in December, backing up other evidence of a relatively buoyant Christmas in the high street, according to figures from the Bank of England. There was an increase in net consumer credit of £297 million compared with a rise of £600 million recorded in November. The December figures topped off a year which saw a total increase in consumer credit of £7.51 billion, the biggest rise since this statistical series began in 1991. Economists noted that these strong borrowing figures may not necessarily reflect higher spending. Gross lending fell slightly in December, suggesting that the surge in credit related partly to lower repayments rather than extra spending. In addition, a proliferation of zero interest rate schemes has

encouraged people to use credit instead of cash. Nevertheless, the figures overall suggest that consumers are beginning to gain in confidence. Separate figures from the British Bankers' Association confirmed that personal borrowing is quite buoyant. The association said that mortgage lending was up 9 per cent in the final three months of the year compared with the third quarter and consumer credit was up by almost a third. Total lending was up by £6.36 billion in the first quarter and about 70 per cent of this was accounted for by lending to individuals. Final figures for M4 money supply showed annual growth in the measure of 9.9 per cent. Broad money has now been growing faster than the upper limit of its 3 to 9 per cent monitoring range for three months.

BUSINESS ACCOUNTS

IS YOUR BANK LAUGHING ALL THE WAY?

BANKS	INTEREST EARNED AFTER COSTS*
High Street Bank	-£114.00
High Street Bank	-£75.00
High Street Bank	-£3.00
High Street Bank	-£74.30
Cater Allen Bank	£425.00

* Annual interest earned on a credit balance of £10,000 after deduction of costs for the transactions per quarter. Source: Calculations based on interest rates supplied by Manufacturers and on charges obtained from High Street banks. Information correct at time of going to print.

It's no wonder. Just look at our chart. After costs and interest earned, you would owe the high street bank with the worst performing account £114. But, with the Cater Allen Corporate High Interest Cheque Account, you would be £539 better off. Why? Because we pay a higher interest rate and will give you 150 free transactions each quarter. This account is for businesses that maintain a credit balance and the higher interest rate reflects your status. Call us now and together we will create the most suitable package to meet your needs. We can also give you details of other Cater Allen onshore and offshore services.

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Airtours finds a lift as Carnival comes to town

STOCK MARKET inventors are hocking Airtours can bring a bit of sun into their lives soon by confirming that the US Carnival Corporation has taken a near 30 per cent stake.

The Airtours share price crept 6p higher to 436p on turnover of 534,000 shares in a market where shares are normally quoted in parcels of 10,000. Whispers circulating in the Square Mile suggest an announcement is imminent.

Last month Airtours said it was in talks with Carnival about potential co-operation agreements. This followed months of speculation that Carnival was about to launch a full-scale bid for the fast-growing Airtours, which is Britain's second biggest package tour operator.

It now seems Carnival is prepared to take a 29.9 per cent stake in Airtours as well as agreeing co-operation agreements. The speculators claim Carnival is prepared to pay up to 500p a share for its holding, valuing the entire group at £576 million.

There was a muted response to confirmation of the overnight cut in US interest rates. Brokers said much of it was already in the price. The reluctance of the Bundesbank to cut German interest rates also depressed sentiment.

In the event, an opening fall in the Dow Jones industrial average left the FT-SE 100 index nursing a fall of 6.5 points at 3,752.8 by the close. Total turnover reached 859 million, helped by further heavy dealing in Hanson, down 9p at 193.4p, where another 52 million shares changed hands.

Reed International dropped 24p to 110.12 despite a denial of a profits downgrade from the company's broker, ABN Amro Hoare Govett.

Persistent bid speculation lifted Yorkshire Electricity a further 17p to 736p, for a two-day gain of 52p. There is talk of a bid of 800p a share from West Coast, the US utility group, valuing Yorkshire at £1.2 billion.

The news that Celltech had abandoned further trials of CDP 840, its asthma treatment, after disappointing results from a series of Phase 2a studies sent the share price plunging 163p to 518p. The test had been carried out jointly with Merck, the US pharmaceutical group, its partner in the venture. The tests includ-



ERF tumbled after giving warning on full-year profits

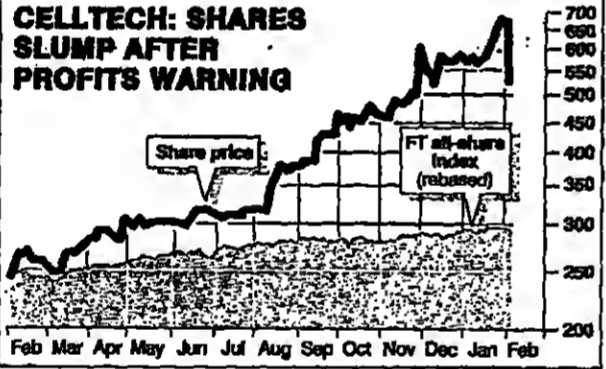
ed the treatment did not reach the level of effectiveness required and has saddled Celltech with milestone payments and royalties of £31.5 million.

The fall-out from Celltech hurt the other biotechnology shares with Canab Pharmaceuticals down 35p at 470p, Chiroscience 15p at 284p, and Cortes International 22p at 272p.

WPP Group, the advertising agency headed by Martin Sorrell, put on another 4p to a high of 176p. Pay day for Mr Sorrell looks as if it could come a lot sooner than expected. Under the terms of the deal struck, he has three years to get the share price up to 300p before triggering an estimated £25 million bonus.

222p. Grampian Holdings was steady at 122p. Bell Lawrie White, the broker, says that with the help of restructuring the shares could reach 200p within the next 18 months.

Tesco fell 8p to 292p as NatWest Securities joined the growing band of brokers who are warning downgrading their profit estimates. It has cut its forecast for the year to February 1996 by £9 million to



The news that Celltech had abandoned further trials of CDP 840, its asthma treatment, after disappointing results from a series of Phase 2a studies sent the share price plunging 163p to 518p.

plant hire group, nursing a fall of 11p to 86p. The group said conditions had worsened since first-half figures were announced in November, and this will be reflected in second-half figures.

Outbacks in Government spending on the infrastructure and road building had hit the group's civil engineering activities.

Unitrac was static at 480p with Electrowatt, its biggest shareholder, continuing to look for a buyer for its near 30 per cent stake.

Better than expected interim figures from Mays, the computer software group, sent its share price soaring 62p to 637p with pre-tax profits 71 per cent higher at £19.2 million.

The gold price staged a chart break-out as it climbed above \$410 an ounce, with traders forecasting that the next step for the precious metal could be \$440. This also provided gold shares with renewed impetus.

Gains were seen in American Gold, 134p to 169.84p, Grovotec, 7p to 239p, Randfontein 19p to 282p, Silfontein 9p to 90p, and Vaal Reef 169p to 168.19p.

The building sector attracted institutional support in the belief that interest rates are set to fall and house prices rise during the next six months. Blue Circle rose 11p to 355p, Redland 4p to 403p, and Rugby 3p to 115p.

GLT-EDGED: Prices opened a touch easier with the overnight cut in US interest rates apparently already taken into account by institutional investors. But early losses were quickly wiped out partly helped by a weaker than expected US purchasing managers index and the latest jobless numbers.

The failure of the Germans to cut rates also dampened sentiment.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt finished five ticks better at £110 1/2 as a total of 67,000 contracts were completed.

At the longer end of the cash market, Treasury 8 per cent 2013 rose £ 1/2 to £102 1/2, while in shorts Treasury 8 per cent 2000 finished a tick down at £104 1/2.

NEW YORK: Shares traded lower at midday but the overall market was showing resilience after five consecutive record closes. The Dow Jones industrial average was down 18.06 at 5,377.24.

with Trade Indemnity's net assets of just £56 million in 1994, but its NAV should continue to grow as the bad debts gradually fall out of the picture. Major institutional shareholders - with 53 per cent of the vote - have already accepted the SFAC offer, and the 33 per cent premium should be enough to keep the rest happy.

Even if Trade Indemnity has another two good years before the cycle turns, investors are safer selling today.

REGENT CORPORATION REVEALED yesterday the immediate departure of Chris Johnson, its deputy chairman, and Carl Turpin, its chief executive.

The company also revealed that £1.4 million, a sum equal to half of the householder's market capitalisation, has gone through write offs or provisions.

Shareholders will have few qualms about raising their

Table with 4 columns: Name, Price, Change, Volume. Includes shares like Ballynary Hldgs, Century Inns, etc.

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Fighting on the forecourt

BIG OIL has for years watched passively while the grocers stole their petrol retailing business and it was only a matter of time before they retaliated. The oil majors have only themselves to blame: decades of indifferent marketing has led the public to the correct conclusion that petrol is a commodity, differentiated only by price and the dinginess of the place where it is sold.

With new fascias and fancier forecourts, the grocers are fighting back and the grocers should be worried at news that Esso is determined to match them on price. The margin on prices at the refinery gate is wafer thin so oil companies desperately need successful retail outlets to show a profit on their downstream activities.

There was a time when grocers claimed to earn little from petrol retailing - merely a

manageable earnings multiple of 15.

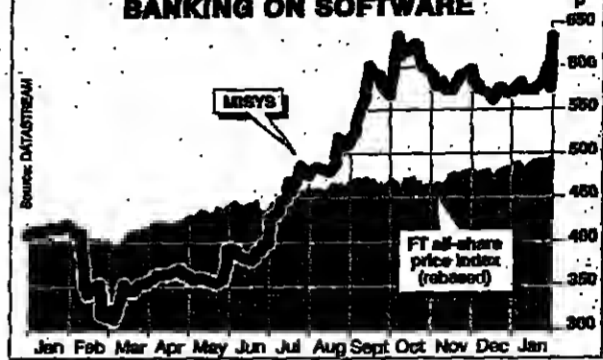
Again Hanson-like, acquisitions are behind the Mays motor. Profits from existing businesses actually fell over the half year. Questions have been raised about the company's ability to grow without further corporate deals, and the market is hoping for a new acquisition within 12

Misys

MANAGERS of the demerged Hanson could do worse than take a look at Misys, the computer software company, for lessons on how to run a more focused company. Kevin Lomax, himself a Hanson alumna, has rapidly built a £50 million business, using Hanson-like acquisitive skills, but with a much tighter focus.

Misys concentrates on applications software for the banking and insurance industries. ACT, a £193 million purchase last year, has bedded in well in spite of market concern at the time, and contributed most of the 71 per cent jump in profits at the half year. Mr Lomax talks bullishly about a strong second half that should see full-year profits about £50 million, putting Misys on a

months. The roller-coaster share performance suggests a degree of nervousness among investors and leaves the company little room for error. A purchase poorly received by the market would wipe out the gains of recent months, but a good buy could see Misys reach stratospheric heights. Not for the faint-hearted.



Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec Jan

Trade Indemnity

THE profit record of Trade Indemnity tells a tale of a cyclical market, and the 33 per cent premium being offered by SFAC for the company suggests that the market is peaking. However, the largest French provider of credit reinsurance credit reinsurance is becoming increasingly international and therefore wants to join forces with Trade Indemnity.

Both companies are targeting multinationals which depend on their credit insurers for reliable and speedy information. That means investment in expensive information technology, favouring larger groups.

Big bad-debt provisions hurt Trade Indemnity during the recession, but analysts believe 1995's pre-tax profit, which is based on 1992 underwriting, should be about £20 million, compared with just £5 million in 1994.

SFAC's £177 million offer looks generous compared

with Trade Indemnity's net assets of just £56 million in 1994, but its NAV should continue to grow as the bad debts gradually fall out of the picture. Major institutional shareholders - with 53 per cent of the vote - have already accepted the SFAC offer, and the 33 per cent premium should be enough to keep the rest happy.

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February 1, 1996 The Times Call 2864 Fax 2031 FTSE Call 2449 Fax 2865 Underlying security price.

Oil and gas output at ten-year record

By MARTIN BARROW

BRITAIN'S oil and gas production reached its highest level last year, according to the Royal Bank of Scotland's oil and gas index.

Oil output grew 2 per cent during the year to the highest level for more than a decade. Average daily production reached 2.54 million barrels per day (bpd), just below the previous highest level of 2.59 million barrels, which was reached in 1985. During the

year as a whole the UK's North Sea oilfields produced 927 million barrels, equivalent to 360 gallons for every man, woman and child in Britain.

Britain's gas output rose even faster, increasing by 8 per cent to a record high. This was achieved despite subdued gas demand for heating for much of the year.

The upsurge in output was assisted by the growth in demand from new gas-fired

power stations and because of the extremely cold period in December. Gas production during the month was 34 per cent higher than one year ago, helped also by the availability of cheap gas supplies.

Mark Shea, the Royal Bank's energy economist, said: "These figures confirm the success of the oil industry in using new lower cost technologies, which make it possible to develop successfully the new smaller fields."

"They also reflect the success of the industry in extending the life of existing fields and recovering a much higher proportion of their overall reserves than was originally thought possible. I believe that this success will continue and that we will see further production increases both this year and next."

The index shows that North Sea oil output was down again in January by nearly 39,000 bpd to an average 2.63 million bpd. But gas production rose again to the highest level since the index was launched in 1991.

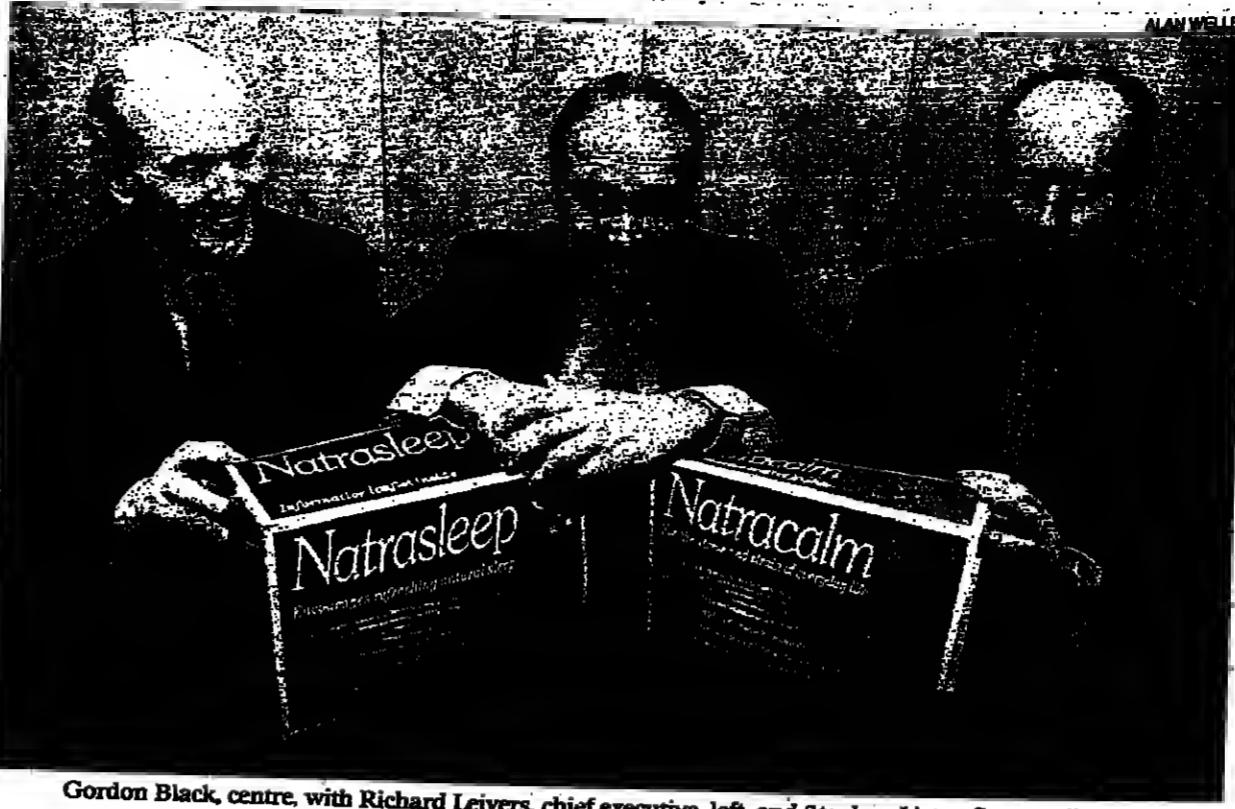
equivalent of 77 million barrels per day, compared to total world oil consumption and production of 70 million barrels per day.

Brent crude oil futures traded almost 1.1 million contracts last month, an increase of 10 per cent over the previous record set in January 1995 and the first time that more than one million contracts have been traded in a single month.

Peak trading month for Petroleum Exchange

VOLATILE oil prices, caused by the cold snap and short stock position in northern Europe, underpinned a record month of trading on the International Petroleum Exchange in London in January (writes Martin Barrow).

A total of 1.69 million contracts were traded, an increase of 16 per cent over the previous high set in November 1993. This represents the



Gordon Black, centre, with Richard Leivers, chief executive, left, and Stephen Lister, finance director

Sales raise interim at Peter Black

PETER BLACK, the toiletries and cosmetics company that supplies Marks and Spencer, achieved an 8.1 per cent increase in profits in the first half of the current year (Martin Barrow writes).

At the pre-tax level profits eased to £8.2 million from £8.4 million in the six months to December 2, although compa-

table results for the previous year included a £67,000 surplus from the sale of a discontinued operation.

Group turnover was almost unchanged at £69.3 million, compared with £69.9 million, but like-for-like sales were up 6.8 per cent. Net margins on continuing businesses increased to 11.8

per cent from 10.9 per cent. Gordon Black, chairman, said: "We remain confident that the current progressive trend can be maintained."

The interim dividend rises 8.7 per cent to 1.37p a share from 1.26p, to be paid April 30. Earnings were 10.13p a share (9.52p). The shares rose 3p to 275p.

ICI plans expansion and jobs

By OUR BUSINESS STAFF

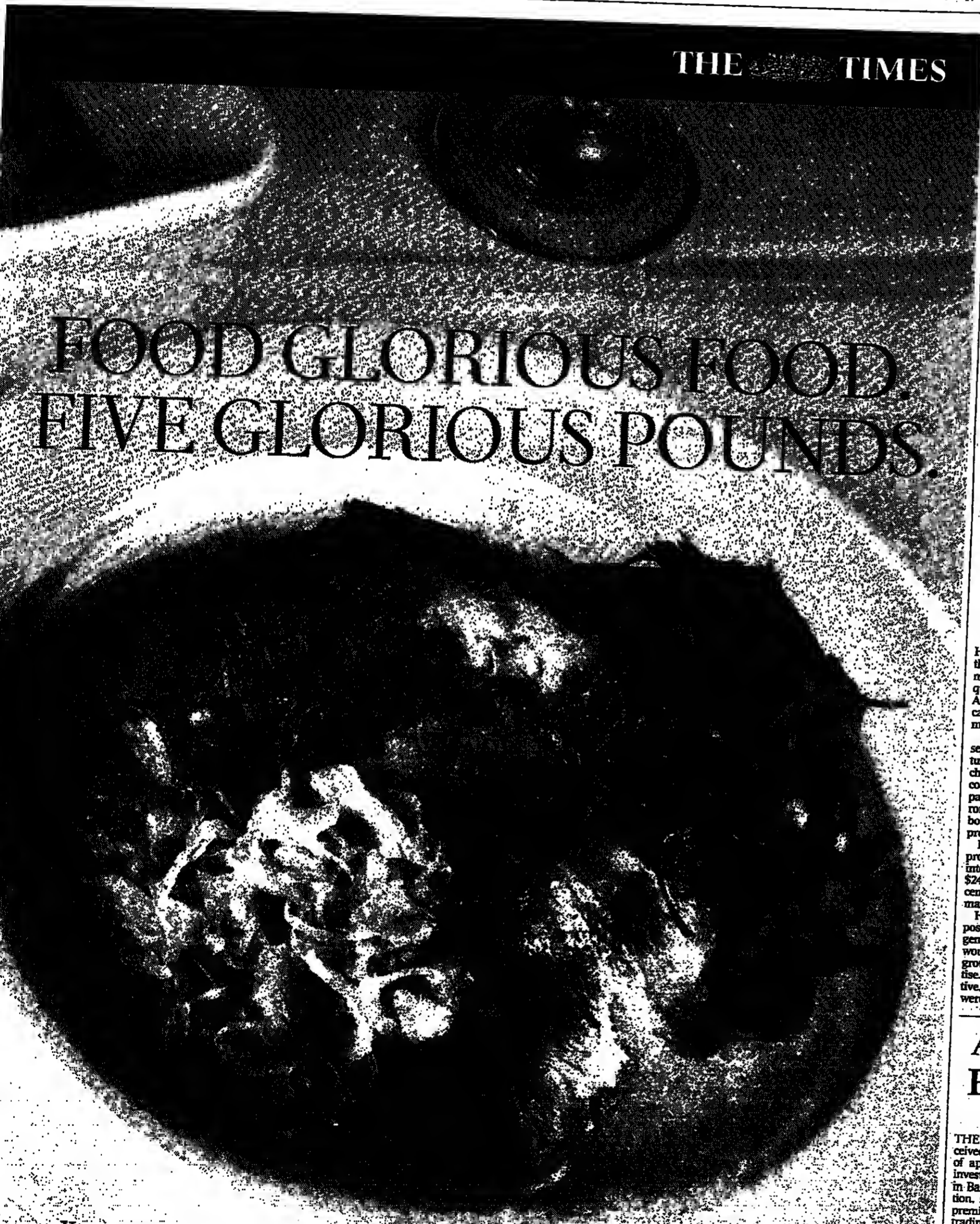
ICI is to invest £60 million in building a new melinex polyester film plant alongside its existing plants at Dumfries, creating 50 permanent jobs in the area and a further 200 during construction.

The plant will add an extra 20,000 tonnes a year to the company's existing world capacity of more than 100,000 tonnes. The plant should come on stream during 1997 and will mainly supply the packaging industry.

Separately, ICI has agreed an outsourcing deal worth more than £75 million over five years with Origin involving about 400 staff in the UK and Holland.

Origin, in which Philips Communications has an 82 per cent interest, will take over ICI's mainframe and legacy applications and management of some other mid-range systems, together with ICI's data centres at Runcorn, Cheshire and in Rozenburg in The Netherlands.

The agreement involves two ICI divisions - ICI Systems and TASC (Telecoms and Systems Computing), which manages ICI's mainframe computing.



THE TIMES

FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD
FIVE GLORIOUS POUNDS

You can eat out up to fourteen times at any of 350 of the finest restaurants in the country for just £5. What's more, from February 12 until the end of March, you can take up to five friends with you. Each restaurant has been chosen from either The Michelin, AA Best Restaurant or Good Food guides. For details and your first token in tomorrow's Times Magazine. Bon appetit.

Profits warning rocks ERF shares

By MARTIN BARROW

SHARES in ERF Holdings, one of Britain's last surviving independent truck manufacturers, fell to a three-year low yesterday after the company gave a warning that annual profits would be significantly below current forecasts.

ERF said that, despite a strong first half, order intake slowed markedly in December and January, forcing it to introduce short-time working at its plants. Industry analysts estimate that demand for trucks has declined by about 40 per cent since the autumn.

Shares in ERF fell to 182p from 342p after the announcement, with pre-tax profit forecasts downgraded to just £1.6 million for the year to March 31, compared with the £2.3 million profit reported in the previous 12 months. The City had previously expected profits of about £2.6 million.

ERF said, however, that order intake has seen some

recovery and the export business continues to improve, particularly in Africa.

Separately, the company is seeking alternative and additional sources of term finance, with new arrangements expected to be in place within a few months.

Its principal banker has indicated that overdraft facilities are available to March 31, 1997, and a medium-term loan of £4 million repayable in January 1998. The profit warning was accompanied by details of a restructuring of the company's interests in South Africa.

Dorbyl, a South African engineering company, is to take a 70 per cent interest in ERF South Africa (ERFSA), acquiring shares from the country's Industrial Development Corporation and the management. ERF's interest will fall from 56.1 per cent to 30 per cent.

Harrisons buys US company

By OUR CITY STAFF

HARRISONS & Crosfield, the chemicals and building materials company, has acquired Daniel Products, an American speciality chemicals company, for about \$30 million.

Daniel, based in New Jersey, develops and manufactures pigments and other chemicals used in paints and coatings. The company claims particular expertise in environmentally friendly waterborne and high solid content products.

In 1994 the company earned profits of \$3.1 million before interest and tax on turnover of \$24.3 million. About 30 per cent of sales are destined for markets outside the US.

H&C said its international position would help Daniel to generate more sales, while it would gain from the acquired group's technological expertise. Bill Turcan, chief executive, said further acquisitions were possible.

Ocean sells control of laboratories

By OUR CITY STAFF

OCEAN GROUP, the industrial and distribution services company, will incur a £29 million charge after selling a majority interest in NET, its American environmental testing business, to its managers.

NET's laboratories provide analytical services to industry and public authorities. It has suffered because of a decline in demand for its services, after a reduction in federal support, resulting in intense price competition. In the first half, NET lost £300,000, following a loss of £2.8 million after exceptional costs for all of 1994.

The management buy-out team is led by David Caspersen, president of NET. Ocean has sold 60 per cent of NET's equity for nominal consideration. Ocean has also provided in full against its remaining investment and for guarantees. This provision, of £12.5 million, is in addition to £16.5 million of goodwill previously written off to reserves upon acquisition.

Australia buys on BankWest's debut

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE IN SYDNEY

THE Bank of Scotland received an overwhelming seal of approval from Australian investors yesterday as shares in BankWest, its new acquisition, soared to a 26 per cent premium on its first day of trading on the Australian stock exchange.

Shares in BankWest, in which Bank of Scotland retains a 51 per cent controlling stake, rose 53 cents to A\$2.58 (£1.27), with more than 38 million shares changing hands. Ian MacKenzie, chairman of BankWest, said: "I think the public demand for the stock reflects the confidence brought by the anchor shareholder, which has a great deal of expertise and experience in banking."

far greater than analysts had expected, values Bank of Scotland's stake, which it acquired for a net A\$462 million (£229 million), at more than A\$580 million.

The Bank of Scotland, which agreed to sell down 49 per cent of BankWest when it acquired the bank from the Western Australian government in December, had been forced to close the public share offer more than three weeks early and scale back allocations in the face of overwhelming demand.

Fraser Campbell, Bank of Scotland's general manager for Australasian operations, said BankWest had produced outstanding results in the past few years and was now clearly one of the best performing banks in Australia.

Small losses at the close

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

Table of stock prices categorized by sector: ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, BANKS, BREWERIES, PUBS & REST, BUILDING & CONSTRUCT, BUILDING MATERIALS, CHEMICALS, DISTRIBUTORS, ELECTRICITY, ELECTRONIC & ELECT, ENGINEERING, ENGINEERING VEHICLES, FOOD MANUFACTURERS, HEALTHCARE, HOUSEHOLD GOODS, INSURANCE, INVESTMENT TRUSTS, LEISURE & HOTELS, MEDIA, MINING, OIL & GAS, OTHER FINANCIAL, RETAILERS, FOOD, RETAILERS, GENERAL, TRANSPORT, WATER.

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Table of interest rates and bond yields: SHORTS (under 5 years), LONGS (over 15 years), UNDATED, MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years), INDEX-LINKED (on projected inflation).

ICI plans expansion and job... fits warm... s ERF sha... Ocean's... laborat... Italia buys... West's det

مركز الاستثمار

Main table containing unit trust prices for various funds, organized in columns with headers for fund names and prices.

TESSA ACTION PACK advertisement with text: 'If you have a maturing TESSA, or you wish to take out a new TESSA, this is essential reading...' and phone number 0800 850 661.

Face to face with your genius? (Vertical text on the right edge of the page)

CHOICE 1

Siobhan Davies is among those making dances for Spring Collection

CHOICE 2

Twelfth Night, with Edward Petherbridge, is back at the RSC

THE TIMES ARTS

CHOICE 3

John Osborne's The Entertainer takes the stage in Birmingham

JAZZ

From Italy with charisma: Paolo Conte, advocate turned crooner, prepares for his Barbican date

LONDON

SPRING COLLECTION: The South Bank Centre and the Place Theatre offer a marathon weekend of some of the best of British contemporary dance...

WEEKEND CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Kris Anderson

Osborne's The Entertainer: Transfers to Leeds in March... Twelfth Night: Lan Judge's delightful production returns for a third season...

LIVERPOOL

Carl Davis and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra team up for a real treat of a performance tomorrow...

WATFORD

Giles Crotts returns to the stage at the Watford Palace Theatre...

LONDON GALLERIES

Barbican: Daughter of the British... British Museum: The British Museum's new gallery...

THE CHANGING ROOM

David Storey's fascinating play about a rugby league team preparing for the week's game...

THEATRE GUIDE

Jerome Kingdon's assessment of theatre showing in London... Includes listings for various theatres like the Royal Court, Cottesloe, and the Old Vic.

THE SHAKESPEARE REVUE

Blended Brecht: Phoenix (0171-887 0644)... Includes listings for various Shakespeare Revue productions.

LONG RUNNERS

Blended Brecht: Phoenix (0171-887 0644)... Includes listings for long-running productions.

NEW RELEASES

FATHER OF THE BRIDE PART II... Includes listings for new film releases.

CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and elsewhere... Includes listings for various cinema screenings.

HEAT (15)

LA detective Al Pacino tries to catch Robert De Niro's crooked cop...

THE INNOCENT SLEEP (15)

Rupert Graves stars as a man who should be dead...

WANTING TO BREATHE (15)

Comedy-drama about jazz-rock band leaders...

Law of the jungle music

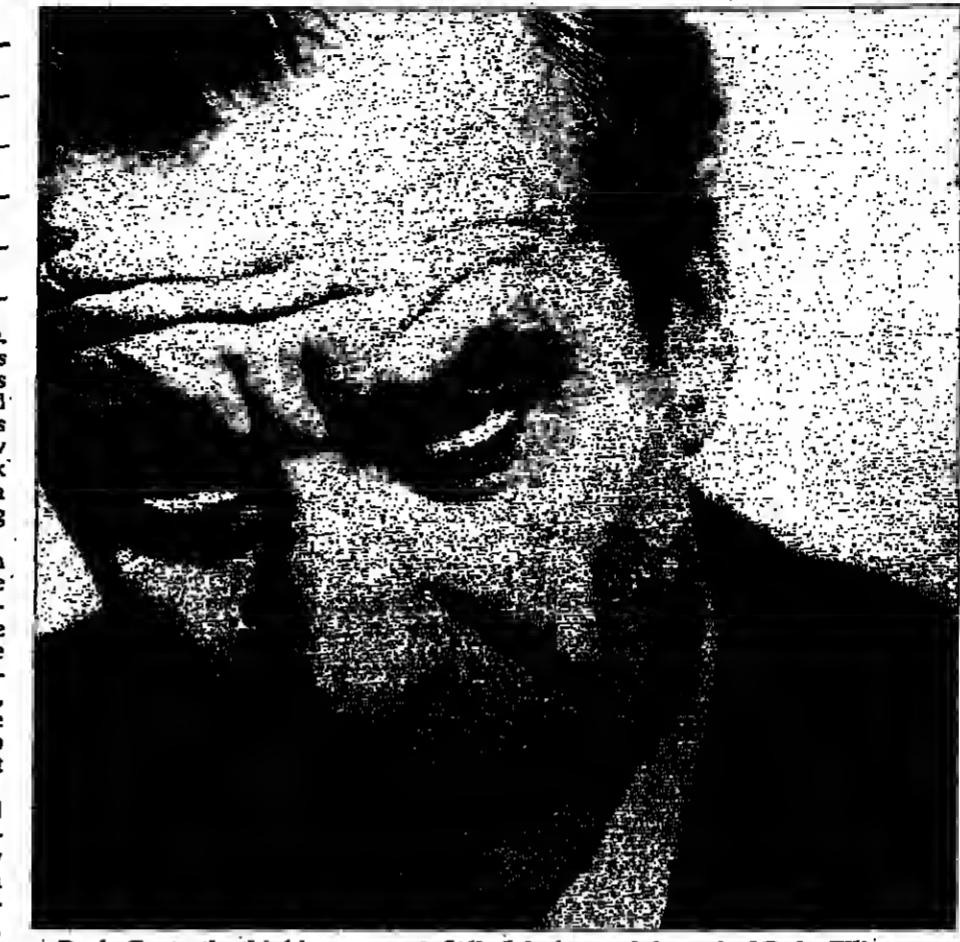
Clive Davis meets a legal eagle turned jazzman on the eve of his London visit

The city of Toulouse, known to its admirers as 'la ville rose', has many architectural splendours...

This bleak outcrop of wan municipal concrete forms the least suitable venue imaginable for a performer as subtle as Paolo Conte...

His raw, guttural voice and the melodies swirling around the Palais des Sports seem utterly contemporary...

AS A way of launching the Contemporary Music Network into a second quarter-century...



Paolo Conte: the thinking woman's Julio Iglesias, and devotee of Duke Ellington

casts a curious spell over his public, whether or not they understand his decidedly elliptical Italian lyrics...

On this occasion, Gibbs conducted the 16-piece orchestra, driven by guest drummer Peter Erskine...

rowed Conte brow is well to the fore. Here is a loner, you are led to believe...

Mike Gibbs/Creative Jazz Orchestra Queen Elizabeth Hall

the ideal vehicle for his style of popular song. 'Italian is a beautiful language, but it's not very rhythmic...

compulsory - fared equally well under Gibbs's sensitive handling...

For years he practised civil law in his family's firm, while playing piano in his free time...

In concert, his pitch wanders far and wide on occasion, appearing to leave his band cruising in some distant key...

At Toulouse, after a two-hour set including an epic tango encore, he gives a casual wave and disappears into the wings...

Such intelligent cohesiveness, embracing the most rousing Musigian rambunctiousness at one extreme and the subtlest impressionistic delicacy at the other...

Electric and eclectic

By Charles Ives. Mark-Anthony Turnage and Oliver Knussen. A couple of Gibbs pieces, the hauntingly coterplative To Lady Mac In Memory...

ENTERTAINMENTS ART GALLERIES DANCE OPERA & BALLET THEATRES

THE CHANGING ROOM THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA THE WOMAN IN BLACK

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA THE WOMAN IN BLACK THE INNOCENT SLEEP

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA THE WOMAN IN BLACK THE INNOCENT SLEEP

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA THE WOMAN IN BLACK THE INNOCENT SLEEP

ROYAL ALBERT HALL THE CENTENARY PRODUCTION OF LA BOHEME



POP 1

A class act on twin tracks: how Gemini are spreading a little melody in our schools



POP 2

Babylon Zoo follow their astounding single with an equally fine new album

THE TIMES ARTS



POP 3

... while Nick Cave presents a chilling disc of Gothic melodrama on Murder Ballads



POP 4

... and Marion, five Mancunians, make a fine album debut with This World and Body

Alan Jackson joins chart wannabes Gemini on a groundbreaking gig - at a school in the Midlands

Extra lessons in screaming

It is a cold, wet Wednesday afternoon in Wolverhampton, and lingering in the corridors of Deansfield High is the faint but unmistakable smell of school dinners only recently served. All around us is clean and polished, and the passing teenager flagged down for directions to the Head's office proves to be a model of politeness. It is not an environment which immediately says to you "showbusiness". Yes, the pupils are in rehearsal for a forthcoming production of The Mikado, but this would not be the first place you would think of looking for the next Take That or Boyzone. Which - today at least - would be a mistake. In the assembly hall it may be true for the weekly PSE (Personal and Social Education) programme, but on offer is not a reprise of the last highlight, a question-and-answer session with the Samaritans. The rows of shuffling, fidgeting girls and determinedly uninterested boys are here to cast their verdict on teen pop's latest wannabes - Gemini, identical twins David and Michael Smallwood, 21, all smouldering looks and razor-sharp cheekbones on the cover of their latest single, Steal Your Love Away.



Gemini rising: David and Michael Smallwood meet and greet their public after an SRO gig at Deansfield High School in Wolverhampton

The idea of doing a schools tour came to me back in 1991 when I was promoting Take That," says the duo's manager, Carolyn Norman. "It was in the days before they had a record deal, and I was looking for ways of building them a fan base. We'd tried doing a Tiffany America's youth sensation of 1993, all but forgotten by 1990, and playing the shopping malls, but it was a bit of an embarrassment for the lads - you could never get the sound right, and people were too busy doing their shopping to take much notice. "A club tour wasn't right either - the punters are there to dance or to meet friends, so aren't interested in paying attention to a bunch of hopefuls. We needed something new and exciting, something that would allow us to hit that sector of the youth market that actually does go out and spend its money on singles - and this was it. Not that we were ransacking the band down children's throats and saying 'Get the record, or else...' It was just a matter of taking the opportunity to in-

roduce the boys to a contained audience and saying: 'Well, here they are and this is what they do. What do you think?' It all makes good business sense, but where is the educational value in a four-song performance by kioskous, pointing Gemini? Hugh Hesse, head of Deansfield and its 500 pupils, has a plausible explanation. "We're trying to raise achievement levels in a school where many of our youngsters come from backgrounds where unemployment, housing and general lack of facilities are an issue," he says. "But more fundamentally we're about trying to raise aspirations. "Three girls in Year Ten petitioned to invite them here, and I thought that it would be useful for our 13 and 14-year-olds to have the chance to see two other young people who themselves are aspiring to move forward and make their way in the world. We're not

saying that this is the career path they too should follow. We're just saying look, listen, ask questions and see what you can learn. It's what PSE is all about - broadening pupils' horizons, challenging some of their assumptions about themselves and the world around them. And, of course, there's been a great buzz in school because it involves a pop group. "Back in the assembly hall, it's ready, steady and go for Gemini in their bid to capture the pocket money vote. Against backing tracks crudely distorted by the predictably dodgy acoustics, they sing their singlet-covered hearts out, all the while twisting and turning their way through the complex dance routines de rigueur at

this end of the pop market. Initially coy, the girls in the audience soon remember how to scream. "They're sex on legs," is the joint conclusion of Kelly Hopkins and Kathy Jones. "Good singers, great bodies - far better than Take That," chime in Katrina Hyde and Michelle Aris. In the row behind, a male classmate viewing the proceedings from behind Joe 90-style specs opines with all due sagacity: "Very professional presentation, and good songs." Ah! So he'll be buying the Gemini single? "No." After a Pagan-esque grilling from the floor ("What's your favourite football team?" "Have you got a girlfriend?" "What's the best way to tell

you apart?") and a lengthy autograph-signing session which finds some newly minted girl fans coming around for a second or even a third time, the twins retire gratefully to an empty classroom. Yes, they acknowledge, for every "What! there's a score of failures," says Michael. "But even to get to the stage we're at now, first with a publishing deal as songwriters, then with a recording deal as artists, is an achievement." David adds: "OK, so the percentage of boy groups who actually get deals then go on to make it as big as Take That is small. But never mind. We'll just do our best and be as successful as we can be." "They're such nice, ordinary lads, magnificent at dealing with the kids," is the verdict of Ken Gilkes, the staff member in charge of Deansfield's entertainments programme and hence the man lobbied by the school's three original Gemini

fans, Joanne Till, Clare Wiley and Vicki Summers. Norman, who has also been involved in the careers of Bad Boys Inc, Let Loose and Right Said Fred, says: "I can't say exactly why I wanted them to be the first band I managed, other than that I got the most horrendous butterflies in my stomach the first time I saw them perform. They're stars even before they've got started. They're nice guys, they're absolutely sunning to look at - and they're talented. Which, at the end of the day, is what counts." So even though, right now, Gemini are climbing into the back of a van in a wet Wolverhampton school playground, that doesn't mean they're no-hopers. This is what it takes nowadays to break a ten band - and they gave it their all. If anyone deserves Deansfield's spending money, it's these two. ● Steal Your Love Away is available now on EMI

They're nice lads, magnificent at dealing with the kids

Are you the Marion kind?

What Marion are doing is so unfashionable that one expects to see the Duchess of York wearing it at some charity bash next week. In an in-between time, after the cartoon jolliness of the bright Britpop crowd and before whatever happens next, Marion have wandered off into the high mountains and thundery skies of wild, impassioned pop-rock - the same vein that Radiohead, early U2 and Echo and the Bunnymen mined so rewardingly. There's no irony, punch-ups, Children's BBC positivity or novelty Top Ten hits here; just a massive sense of relief, release, and a nagging compulsion to record aspirational, inspirational, rock that means something.



CAITLIN MORAN

Marion's lyricist, the 20-year-old wunderkind Jaime Harding, wails hard and long about "all going together" into suicide, lost dreams, stifled ambitions and endless grey skies. This World and Body (reviewed below) is an album you could live inside for weeks. Its drive, passion and breadth hint at a band that could be seriously rivalling Radiohead within a year for the coveted Band Most Likely to Break America in Two award. You could drive a thousand miles to This World and Body. "Well, we write all our songs while we're driving around," Harding says. "We peg it all around Buxton and grey, lumpy places like that; trying to fit chord changes to gear changes. That's probably what makes the album sound so driven - because we were being driven at the time. You know that feeling, where certain chords seem to make the car go faster? That's what we were aiming for." And they've done it admirably well, to a point where, after a disappointing year ("We were bobbins at Glastonbury - we'd finished the album the day before and had a new bass-player we'd never even rehearsed with, I felt so sick because we were

he ever feels fully free. "I have horrible nightmares," he says. "My mum and stepdad were woken up by me banging on the front door at three in the morning. I was wearing just pants, a pair of Doc Martens, a rucksack, and burbling on about how a man was going to steam me to death. But I love sleep - it's my favourite thing." What are the other nine? "Oh, another nine kinds of sleep. You know - on your side, on your front, in a chair, on the floor, in a van... I had my best ever sleep in New York last year. We'd gone to see our American record company; they're in a huge building in the middle of Manhattan. We were on the top floor as the sun was going down, and they put on the finished album. It was the first time we'd heard it since we were in the studio. I was looking at New York's lights and dark patches, listening to the album, being amazed by how good it was, by how vindicated I felt. I slept like a baby that night." With Harding's phenomenal work rate ensuring there will be a second Marion album before the end of 1996, the band seem almost certain to set up residence in the charts before the summer is fully out.

Jean genie shakes off the jean jinx

THE phenomenal success of Babylon Zoo's first single, Spaceman, which registered the biggest one-week sale in this country since Band Aid's again in Is Your Soul for Sale?, before petering out in a croak of despair. But it chimes perfectly with the new mood of doomed romanticism that seems to be surfacing as the cheery optimism of Britpop begins to fade. However, with the arrival of Babylon Zoo's debut album, The Boy with the X-Ray Eyes (EMI 7243 8 37204) such worries may confidently be set aside. Written, played, sung and co-produced by 24-year-old Jas Mann from Wolverhampton, it is a credible and cohesive collection of songs which harnesses a big, distorted guitar sound to a futuristic vision that is more lunar-pop than Britpop. Spaceman, a good-natured chronicle of space-age fear and loathing set to an unforgettable chorus, has clearly struck a chord in the Britain of the late 1990s and already has the sound of a pop classic. And, while Mann's glam-rock influences are clear - a sort of Bowie-meets-Suede amalgamation, adapted for the post-grunge era - he has the wit to convert them into something identifiably his own and to carry the torch forward. The mechanical-sounding production results in a lack of swing, but Mann skilfully works the angles on a narrow defined patch, weaving together dense layers of guitars on Zodiac Signs, conjuring a melancholic mood on Caffeine and fitting the jackpot with the surging, Beatles-derived melody of the side track. At his most arch, he sounds like a poor man's Brett Anderson -

NEW ALBUMS: Babylon Zoo are shooting for the moon

son - "London town is burning/And the New York lights are laughing/But nothing, oh nothing, can tear us apart," he sings over and over Do You Know It's Christmastime?, before petering out in a croak of despair. But it chimes perfectly with the new mood of doomed romanticism that seems to be surfacing as the cheery optimism of Britpop begins to fade. However, with the arrival of Babylon Zoo's debut album, The Boy with the X-Ray Eyes (EMI 7243 8 37204) such worries may confidently be set aside. Written, played, sung and co-produced by 24-year-old Jas Mann from Wolverhampton, it is a credible and cohesive collection of songs which harnesses a big, distorted guitar sound to a futuristic vision that is more lunar-pop than Britpop. Spaceman, a good-natured chronicle of space-age fear and loathing set to an unforgettable chorus, has clearly struck a chord in the Britain of the late 1990s and already has the sound of a pop classic. And, while Mann's glam-rock influences are clear - a sort of Bowie-meets-Suede amalgamation, adapted for the post-grunge era - he has the wit to convert them into something identifiably his own and to carry the torch forward. The mechanical-sounding production results in a lack of swing, but Mann skilfully works the angles on a narrow defined patch, weaving together dense layers of guitars on Zodiac Signs, conjuring a melancholic mood on Caffeine and fitting the jackpot with the surging, Beatles-derived melody of the side track. At his most arch, he sounds like a poor man's Brett Anderson -



Missing the boat? Marion have finally released their album but will not play live again until March

and his droll excursion into the mind of a 15-year-old female serial killer in The Curse of Millhaven rank among the best performances of his ten-album solo career. Best of all are the duets with P.J. Harvey (a spellbinding performance of Stagger Lee

Minogue on the mournful Where the Wild Roses Grow, Cave's biggest ever hit. The finale, a grand singalong version of Bob Dylan's Death is not the End featuring the massed voices of Cave, Harvey, Minogue, Shane MacGowan and others, is so macabre it sounds as if the song has not so much been recorded as embalmed.

who sounds like Bono in a hurry - wasn't that last year's thing? And having toured themselves into the ground to promote a couple of singles this time last year, why, with the album finally ready, are they nowhere to be seen until the end of March? Judged purely on its merits This World and Body is a decent enough debut, whose high points include a much improved re-recording of their single Sleep, the typically sensitive ballad Your Body Lies and the pounding rifferama of Fallen Through and The Only Way. But although dispatched with tremendous vigour and a lot of heart, the nagging impression remains that they may have missed the boat. MINISTRY Fifth Pig (Warner Bros 9362-45838) NEVER far from self-parody at the best of times, Ministry have drifted into the realms of cliché with their seventh album, Fifth Pig. Outflanked in recent years by a wave of industrial acts they influenced in the first place, notably Nine Inch Nails, the duo of Al Jourgensen and Paul Barker have responded by redoubling their efforts to sound as grossly doomy and nihilistic as possible. The result is a wearying barrage of sub-Black Sabbath guitar riffs, accompanied by Jourgensen bellowing slogans such as "I've never had a life, I don't even know what life is" in his gargling-of-the-gods voice. It does not work at anything less than window-threatening volume, and even then its theatrical effect is strictly one-dimensional. And their version of Bob Dylan's Lay Lady Lay is so bad it is not even funny.

DAVID SINCLAIR

Table with 10 rows listing top ten albums: 1. (What's the Story) Morning Glory? - Oasis (Creation), 2. Jagged Little Pill - Alanis Morissette (Maverick), 3. Different Class - Pulp (Island), 4. Boyz for Peeps - Tori Amos (East West), 5. Robson & Jerome - Robson & Jerome (RCA), 6. HStory - Michael Jackson (Epic), 7. Something to Remember - Madonna (Maverick), 8. All Change - Cast (Polydor), 9. CrazySexyCool - TLC (LaFace), 10. The Bends - Radiohead (Parlophone)

RADIOHEAD advertisement for 'The Bends' album, featuring a photo of the band and text: 'For many RADIOHEAD's "The Bends" is the album of the year', '1996 brit award nominees best band - best album "the bends"', 'Parlophone' logo.

Young disciples would cherish a game fit for heroes

Walk along a piece of common land in Wales in summer and there you will find small boys playing cricket. Listen and you will hear that they imagine themselves as England, even in these difficult crickering times, playing a Test against Australia or West Indies. Playing for higher international stakes, they might for the moment ignore Glamorgan. Atherton's name will be on every schoolboy's lips as each, in his mind's eye, thinks himself to be the England captain at the crease.



As Wales prepare for Twickenham, Gerald Davies says beating England is still important

Across in the playground of the school, a football game may be in progress, of the spontaneous type where pull-overs form the goalposts and no adult dares interfere. Listen closely to their shouts and the running commentary and Manchester United will be playing Liverpool or Chelsea. There will be no sign of Cardiff or Wrexham. The clamour will be to be Giggs, Rush and Hughes just as much as for Cantona and Schmeichel. Premiership, top of the league stuff, is what matters. Hero worship is a fine thing.

A child's mind a kingdom is. Willy-nilly he will happily cross boundaries without fear, but not always. Not in rugby.

Behind the goalposts in Bala or Llangennech, schoolboys will strike eternal attitudes. Wales will forever be playing England and, unlike the other sports, there will be no takers this time for England. Rugby is Wales.

admit, as Arwel Thomas did last weekend, that, for him, England are the team to beat. England may not care to admit as much, be more reticent, reserved or wishing to effect a cool disinterest in these matters, but, come the moment when the whistle blows, they will feel the same, too, down at the clubhouses of Saracens and Wasps.

The truth, sadly, falls far short of this, for the matches have hardly been ones to inspire. Games between the countries lead to tension and inevitably demand much of a man's nerves; but they are of the teeth-gritting, jaw-jutting kind. There is, finally, no prodigious skill as events unfold, only a stomach for endurance and defiance. Of all the

five nations' championship games, it is the one with the awkward habit of letting us down the most.

If there are moments of enlightenment, they are few. Underwood's 80-yard sprint or Carling's try in 1990; Evans's match-winner in 1993 or Hadley's score after Clement's counter-attack in 1988. We may choose to remember Rob Andrew's immaculate goal-kicking in 1986 or Robert Jones's tactical kicks in 1989. Regrettably, there are matches that are unmemorable for the bland quality of rugby.

Often, the fixture is remembered for the wrong reasons. There is the enduring image of Geoff Wheel and Bill Beaumont in a confrontational stare and snarl in 1980, when Paul Ringer became only the second player ever to have been sent off in an international at Twickenham. We may forget Dusty Hare's calm precision in delivering the final penalty goal that led England to that year's grand slam.

That the fixture has the capacity to diminish players was manifest in the bitterness that overflowed into violence at the Arms Park in 1987. Players carry the baggage of the past and cannot cope with it; as, indeed, does the spectator, who is too loud in his grievances or exaggerated celebrations.

It remains a great fixture, but one that, by now, deserves a better outcome. Of late, Wales have been out of sorts, too frayed at the edges to make this come about. England have had too much of their own way to make the game a proper contest. If the Welsh wag of the Seventies queried whether it was worth continuing the fixture, so can England question that now. The ball is in Wales's court.

More than that, it is high time that we had a game of greatness — and for new heroes to be born — especially in Wales. There is much need of them.



Jones, one of a young breed of Wales players who display the eagerness to conjure up the stuff of Welsh legend. Photograph: Huw Evans

Doctor's son displays supportive touch

By DAVID HANDS RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THERE they have sat this season in their pristine Wales blazers, the international class of 1996, fresh morning faces shining with pride and hope. Features are neutralised by the close-cropped hair styles favoured by the young, but there is no mistaking Arwel Thomas — he is so slim and small that he can only be the stand-off half.

The bigger one who looks as though he might be the new back-row forward turns out to be Leigh Davies, the Neath centre, at 19 the youngest of the breed who have sprung to prominence for Wales, virtually unknown beyond their own border. So heavy is the investment in youth that ten of the side that meet England tomorrow will be playing their first international at Twickenham.

This is a generation that grew up knowing Wales in the 1980s and 1990s struggling, despite the 1994 championship title, to swim with the tide. Davies was two when a grand slam was last won and only 12 when there was the by-now rare pleasure of a triple crown, in 1988. Not for them memories of the dashing Gareth Edwards, the darling Phil Bennett — they can create their own legends.

Among the new boys is Rhodri Gwyn Jones. The open-side flanker is the key to the way in which Wales will approach the championship. When Kevin Bowring announced his XV to play last month, he described his style as based on an open-side who could support his back line and ensure continuity. Ensure, too, that Wales do not get dragged into a dogfight that they cannot win against bigger, heavier forwards.

An A cap followed against Canada, but, in 1994, a string of injuries retarded his progress at much the same time, however. Llanelli lost a host of high quality back-row

forwards and Jones stepped into one of the gaps that Lyn Jones's departure created.

"I'm not blisteringly quick, but it has more to do with anticipation than actual speed," Jones said. "If your angles are good and there's good communication with the backs, you can get there a bit before the opposition."

Jones, whose father is a doctor, is a fourth-year student at the University of Wales College of Medicine. Examinations limited his rugby before Christmas and he was surprised to be called into an extended national squad.

"It will be difficult to combine medicine with rugby, but I have to get my degree," Jones said. "Anything can happen with injuries and rugby only lasts into the 30s."

At 6ft, he is out of the Josh Kronfeld school of flankers, a specialist, ball-handling, support player. "His progress depended upon whether he could develop more power and strength in his game,"

Jenkins said. "He worked at weights to push himself towards 15st and, at the start of this season, I recognised that, if Llanelli were going to be successful, we had to play a game around our No 7."

"What players like Lyn and Gwyn have is uncoachable. It's instinctive. Rugby is more than a game where you hit people over, get up and do it again. Many people play with heart and soul and passion, but when you have an important function in the side, you also have the responsibility of understanding it. Gwyn has that and it makes him captaincy material."

For the moment, Twickenham and a second cap loom. "England will attack close to Arwel [Thomas] and me, and we will have to contain them," Jones said. "That will be the crux of the match, if we can stop their back row." If they do, and if the Wales backs can catch fire, then maybe the stuff of Welsh legend will not seem so far distant after all.

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Slow play flusters Welshman hoping to capitalise on good early form

Woosnam made to wait for resurgence

FROM JOHN HOPKINS GOLF CORRESPONDENT IN PERTH

IAN WOOSNAM left Singapore on the crest of a wave after his victory in the opening event of the PGA European Tour on Sunday. He began the Heineken Classic here yesterday with a zestful round that suggested that the 2,500-mile journey had not diminished his form, nor had the dry, intense heat of Western Australia, where the temperature was more than 90F, sapped his energy.



Woosnam has to sit it out as another hold-up hinders his promising progress in the opening round of the Heineken Classic at The Vines

Playing in a black cap perched against the fierce sun and otherwise dressed in white, Woosnam made light of some of the trickiest holes at The Vines, a difficult course that was playing at its most challenging. A 69, three under par, was infinitely better than Woosnam had expected when he was two over par after seven holes.

Woosnam is a man who likes to get on with things. He talks, eats, walks and drives quickly and, when he has to stand still and watch others on a golf course, he is as restless as a little boy forced to remain indoors and eat his cabbage while his friends are enjoying themselves outside in the garden. Yesterday, he could only fidget; leaning on his club, shifting his weight from one leg to the other, flicking at the perspiration in his face.

At times, Woosnam made it look easy; never more so than on the par-five 18th, where, with elegant strokes of a driver and a six-iron, he hit his ball to within 15 feet and then holed for an eagle. Yet appearances were deceptive. "I find this course very difficult," he said. "Everywhere I want to go is a bunker."

John Daly knew the feeling. He was so intimidated by the bunkers that gnaw into the fairways at precisely the point where he did not want them that his round of 71 was achieved without the use of a wood. His "Killer Whale" metal driver remained sheathed all day.

Woosnam dared use his driver on only eight driving holes; five more than Greg Norman, who recorded a 73. On the other holes, the world No 1 used either a two- or three-iron or three-wood.

"Seems a bit odd to me to build a course where you can hardly ever use your driver," Norman said. "Still, if it is not one Greg, then it is another. While most eyes were looking to see if Norman would yield a dividend on the Aus\$300,000 (about £150,000) that he is reported to have been paid to appear in this event, Greg Turner sped to the front of the field with his lowest round since he won a tournament in Mallorca last March. His 66, six under par, put him jointly in the lead with Wayne Smith.

Smith is in form and a local hero. He has lived in this part of Western Australia for years and finished second in this event for the past two years. Turner, on the other hand, has hardly played in Australia and New Zealand lately because a wrist injury has limited him to European tournaments.

Foster awaiting drug ruling

MARK FOSTER, Great Britain's leading sprint swimmer, is waiting to hear whether a three-month suspension imposed yesterday for a positive test for cannabis taken in France last summer would disrupt his campaign for the Olympic Games in Atlanta (Craig Lord writes). The French Swimming Federation's technical committee has to decide whether the disciplinary action, imposed by France's independent sports doping commission, should be retroactive or start this month.

The latter interpretation would exclude Foster, 25, from the British grand prix meeting that begins today at Cardiff, the World Cup final in Germany a week tomorrow and the British Olympic trials at Sheffield next month. Foster has maintained that the tiny traces of cannabis found in his sample could have occurred only through passive smoking. He attended a commission hearing in France last week and, with the Amateur Swimming Federation of Great Britain, had understood that the action would exclude him only from competition in France.

He had had an earlier letter from FINA, the international governing body, saying as much. However, Cornel Marculescu, the director of FINA, said yesterday that Britain had misunderstood the rules. "We await France's decision and will respect our member's action," he said. "The ban would be worldwide, but I very much believe it will be retroactive."

A French federation spokesman said: "I cannot tell you the dates of the suspension because we have not discussed it yet." He confirmed that one month would be suspended. Dave Haller, Foster's coach, said: "Mark came back from the hearing believing everything was fine and dandy."

Woodhall seeks right to title

RICHELIE WOODHALL, the European middleweight boxing champion from Telford, will have to go back to school to learn how to deal with southpaws after his performance against Derek Wormald on Tuesday (Srikumar Sen writes). As World Boxing Council No 1 contender, Woodhall has a world title bout in June against Quincy Taylor, the champion, who not only leads with his right but also has a knockout punch. From now on, it will be nothing but learning how to beat Taylor, Mickey Duff, Woodhall's manager, said: "I think I'll give him one volun-

tary defence against a southpaw and then give up the European title to concentrate on Taylor." Woodhall said: "I'm not ready for the world title. I need another couple of fights first. By June, southpaw will be tattooed on my forehead." As the Telford man was barely able to land a blow for the first six rounds, attempting to get past the right of Wormald, he will need to. Wormald suffered a truly tragic blow when he learnt after the bout that Peter McEllhinney, his trainer, who collapsed in the corner with a heart attack, had died.

Rivals vie for Vase spotlight

RIVALRY does not come much more intense than that between Filton and Trafford. The extra edge to the inevitable competition between clubs that little more than a mile apart in Manchester comes from Trafford's birth just six years ago as a new venture by disaffected members of Filton.

The clubs are jostling at the top of the North West Counties League, Filton heading the first division with Trafford in fourth place, eight points behind but with four matches in hand.

Nor is either club prepared to yield the limelight in the fifth round of the EA Carlsberg Vase tomorrow. It is a rare feat to reach the last 16 of a national cup competition, but when Filton managed it for the first time, Trafford, in their third Vase season, did so too.

Filton have home advantage against Barwell, of the Midland Alliance, at their Valley Road ground, Trafford, having finally seen off Selby Town 3-0 in a second replay, must travel to Drigg Town, another Northern Counties East League side. Filton went through further upheavals two years ago when its social committee dismissed the manager. The football committee resigned, but John Mitchell, who had been with the club since its formation, in 1960, formed a new committee and brought in Dalton Steele as manager. Steele, a former assistant manager at Stalybridge Celtic, launched a roll of success that has taken Filton out of the second division as champions into direct confrontation with Trafford. The clubs have yet to meet in the league, but Filton won the first part of the on-field argument 3-1 in the Manchester Premier Cup on Tuesday.

Harold hits form right on cue to put Welsh title in sight

DAVE HAROLD was at a loss to explain his sudden, and dramatic, improvement in form after beating Darren Morgan 5-2 in the quarter-finals of the Regal Welsh Open snooker tournament in Newport yesterday.

Morgan's demise left John Parrott as the only player from the top ten in the world rankings to survive and, on the evidence of his latest performance, Harold, who eliminated Stephen Hendry in the previous round, could now repeat his triumph at the 1993 Asian Open. Yet, he arrived in South Wales totally devoid of confidence after suffering first-round defeats in the opening four world ranking tournaments of the 1995-96 campaign.

Henman reaches new ATP heights

TIM HENMAN beat Mark Petchey, his Great Britain Davis Cup colleague, 6-1, 7-6 in the Shanghai Open tennis tournament to reach the semi-finals of an ATP tournament for the first time yesterday. Henman, 21, the No 2 seed, ranked No 84 in the world, is certain to rise in the world rankings this month.

Henman plays Andrei Olhovskiy, of Russia, the No 6 seed, who defeated Cristiano Carati, of Italy, 6-3, 6-4, on Saturday. Jeff Tarango, the No 1 seed, noted for his walk-out and £10,000 fine at Wimbledon last year, beat Danny Sapsford, of Surrey, 5-7, 6-0, 6-3, in the second round yesterday. He beat Jeremy Bates in straight sets on Tuesday.

That did not change despite beating Tony Jones 5-3 and, from 4-1 in arrears, Carl Payne 5-4. "I don't know how I got through because I was playing the most atrocious snooker of my career," Harold said. The metamorphosis occurred during his 5-3 defeat of Hendry, the world champion, on Tuesday. "Something just clicked in my head but I don't know why. It's a mental thing and this game is all between the ears." Harold, who has fallen from thirteenth to 22nd in the provisional rankings this season, said: "Harold could not have wished for a better start against Morgan as he led 2-0 thanks to runs of 72 and 81, but Morgan produced a 143 total clearance in the third frame, the highest break compiled in the event."

At 2-2, it was a difficult match to predict, but Harold dominated the closing three frames to secure a place in the best-of-11 frames semi-final against Mark Williams this afternoon. It will be Harold's first appearance in the last four since the 1994 Skoda Grand Prix.

Morgan, who aggregated only 33 points during his post-interval collapse, was particularly disappointed to have squandered what he regarded as a "golden opportunity" to win on home soil.

Although Morgan, whose home, in Cwmfelinfach, is only ten miles away from the venue, is now a strong favourite to collect the £5,000 highest-break prize, such a financial prospect provided no consolation. "I'd give the money away if I could win that match," he said.

Lomas returns

Table tennis: Lisa Lomas has regained the England women's No 1 spot after successfully coming through the Olympic qualifying tournament in Manchester with nine wins. Lomas, 28, is 66 points ahead of Andrea Holt, the England champion, who still has the knee injury that cost her a similar berth in Atlanta in July. Lomas and Holt will bid to qualify for the Olympic women's doubles in Nantes, from February 9 to 10. The top four men retain their positions, with Matthew Syed, the No 1, ahead of Alan Cooke, Chen Xinhua and Carl Prean.

Young big hitters: Cricket: Maiden centuries by Noel Cric, who made 118, and Owais Shah, who was unbeaten on 114, took England to 335 for five in their first innings, and a lead of 192, at the close of the second day of the third and final under-19 international match against Zimbabwe in Bulawayo.

Seles sweeps in: Tennis: Monica Seles, the No 1 seed, cruised into the quarter-finals of the Pan Pacific indoor tournament in Tokyo yesterday by beating Irina Spilaea, of Romania, 6-4, 6-2.

Run on money: Athletics: The British federation has secured a £1 million, three-year extension of Lucadone's contract. It follows the £2 million deal with Securitor, announced last month, and helps ease an expected six-figure loss for last year.

Seles sweeps in

Run on money: Athletics: The British federation has secured a £1 million, three-year extension of Lucadone's contract. It follows the £2 million deal with Securitor, announced last month, and helps ease an expected six-figure loss for last year.

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Advertisement for 'The Times' newspaper, featuring a large image of the newspaper's masthead and contact information. The masthead includes the title 'The Times' and the phone number '0171-782 7344'. Below the masthead, there are several sections of text, including 'LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES', 'TODAY'S FIXTURES', and 'LEGAL NOTICES'. The advertisement also features a large graphic of a newspaper page with the headline 'Run on money' and other news snippets.

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 2 1996

Sri Lankan authorities stand firm

Australia may pull out of Colombo game

BY ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT

FIASCO threatened the cricket World Cup yesterday as Australia, the favourites, considered the drastic step of forfeiting their first group game to avoid visiting Colombo, the bomb-ravaged Sri Lankan capital.

be guided by the board on this one." Craig McDermott, who has recently received a death threat from Sri Lanka, said on Australian television: "Maybe it puts all games in Colombo in jeopardy, not just Australian games."



Slater, concerned about a "scary" situation

Graham Halbish, the chief executive of the Australian Cricket Board, confirmed yesterday that the possibility of forfeiture would be discussed at a scheduled board meeting next Monday and Tuesday.

Thanks to the extraordinary format of the competition, which will probably entail only one Test-playing nation being eliminated after three weeks of group games, Australia are aware that they could sacrifice one game and still qualify for the quarter-finals with some comfort.

The Australian players' concerns, already aroused by unconnected death threats from fanatics in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, were inevitably heightened when a statement from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs warned against any non-essential travel to Sri Lanka.

This is just the latest setback to a competition plagued by political tension and administrative mismanagement, but it could be the most serious.

If Australia were to take the ultimate measure of withdrawing their team, which nobody one has yet ruled out, the credibility of this troubled event would be destroyed.

Although rugby teams from the New Zealand provinces of Wellington and Otago yesterday cancelled tours to Sri Lanka planned for later this month, the full sporting impact of the suicide bombing on Wednesday has yet to be felt.

eliminate Sri Lanka as a venue, but their problem is finding suitable last-minute alternatives when many cities in Pakistan and India are also suffering intense unrest.

Amrit Mahur, a member of the organising committee, said yesterday: "If need be, we may have to shift the venues of the four matches allotted to Sri Lanka; but that will only be a last option and only if Sri Lanka themselves refuse to hold the matches."

This unlikely scenario became still more improbable with Zimbabwe's agreement to go ahead with their game in the city on February 21. Denis Streak, their team manager, sounded a defiant note when he said: "We don't see it as a major problem. You could get run over by a bus in the street. It's just one of those things. We've thought about it, but we come from a country which knows about war and we're not going to worry about a few bombs."

Tissa Gunaratne, a spokesman for the Sri Lankan Cricket Board, said yesterday: "No country has contacted us over this bombing incident. We are going ahead with preparations. We have not even considered calling off the matches."

Streak, and the Sri Lankan cricket authorities, must prepare themselves for others to think differently on the matter. While the International Cricket Council remains largely powerless and wordless, and while facile guarantees of tight security abound, human nature dictates that sporting teams will think twice before entering what amounts to a war zone.

Simon Barnes, page 16



Parke hopes to recover from his chemotherapy treatment in time for the British Open in April. Photograph: Shaun Botterill/Allsport

Brave Parke battling to beat illness

BY COLIN MCQUILLAN

AT THE end of November, Simon Parke was on top of the world. He was the main attraction at a special press conference at Lamb's Club in London. On one hand was England's first world team squash trophy; on the other, Caroline Varley, his new girlfriend.

Four weeks later, he was facing quite another examination, in the oncology department of the Nottingham City Hospital, where he learnt that a tumour in his right testicle, a teratoma, was a malignant form of cancer that required immediate surgery and a course of chemotherapy.

world junior champion and, for many experts, the best technical performer produced by English squash. He had reached the top of the national rankings and become the first string of the exciting young England squad that had snatched the world team title from Pakistan in Cairo.

"I was very shocked," he said yesterday. "I first noticed a swelling to my right testicle in December, but forgot to take the prescribed antibiotics while in Bombay playing the Mahindra Challenge."

"By Christmas, it was obvious something serious was going on, so I went back to the doctor on Boxing Day, saw an urologist and was in for surgery on January 2. I

thought they could just whip it out and that would be the end of it.

"I told everyone I had appendicitis and would be back in action after missing the national championships.

In fact, there is a month of chemotherapy to deal with the possibility of secondary malignancy. "A sort of insurance," Parke said. "Although even that was a shock. I thought at first I would be having radiotherapy which seemed less dire."

Parke is confident that he caught things early, took the right course of action and should be back in action in time for the British Open in April. His first 48-hour chemotherapy course finished late on

Wednesday. "I feel as sick as a dog and I can't stop hiccupping," he said. "I have a short course next week, just half an hour, then another 48-hour job the week after and another short one on February 22." In theory, he could stay in training throughout.

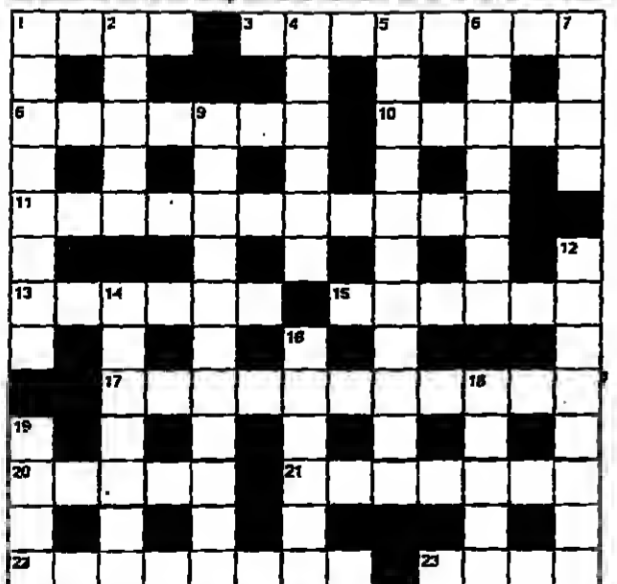
"I have been sitting in hospital with a lot of quite old people, some of whom might not come out," he said. "But I know there is a 95 per cent clear-up rate on testicular cancer, which quite a lot of young men get. We are the lucky ones' really. There are some side effects of the treatment, but losing a bit of hair seems unimportant. I might come back and start a trend in headscarves."

"I think this will change my life, get things into perspective a bit. It has been quite a learning period."

His rankings should not be much affected if he gets back into action as he anticipates, but Parke will certainly miss the finals of the HI-Tec PSA Super Series in Hatfield next month. It seems likely that Mark Cairns, of Oxford, will move into his place among the top eight players of the year's grand prix action.

"That is almost the most irritating thing," Parke said. "I have qualified for those play-offs three years running now. The last two play-offs were held over for lack of sponsorship. Now they get it on and I am too ill to play."

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 694

- ACROSS
1 Give up (4)
3 Without penalty (4-4)
8 Pasta stuffed with meat (7)
10 Ship's petty officer (5)
11 Gardener's hut (7,4)
13 Of the universe (6)
15 French physicist; unit of current (6)
17 Pope's office; hold forth (11)
20 Ward off (5)
21 Part of line, insect body (7)
22 Decisive confrontation (8)
23 Long (family) story (4)
DOWN
1 Tortoise, crab shell (8)
2 Lifeboat crane (5)
4 Shrink in embarrassment (6)
5 Ranting (speaker) (3-8)
6 Little bit left (7)
7 Sicilian volcano (4)
9 Dogmatic (11)
12 Loss of one's marbles (8)
14 An overlord (7)
16 Puzzle for assembly (6)
18 Show-ring (5)
19 The Red Planet (4)

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Stanislaus banned for one year

BY ALYSON RUDD

ROGER STANISLAUS, the Leyton Orient defender, yesterday became the first English football player to be suspended from the game for drug abuse.

Medical evidence presented to the FA is consistent with Stanislaus, 27, having taken cocaine either just before kick-off, or even at half-time, on the day of the random drugs test at Barnet in November.

made his views on drug abuse clear and has been keen to promote Orient as part of the east London community, including giving lectures for children on drug abuse.

- Ferguson wins appeal 3
Asprilla stumbling block 37
Freud on Friday 37

and depending on his future at Leyton Orient. Traces of cocaine were found in samples provided by Stanislaus after Orient's 3-0 defeat at Underhill on November 25. Stanislaus told the FA disciplinary commission that he smoked a banned substance at a family funeral on the Thursday evening before the match. If

Carling sets Twickenham priority

BY DAVID HANDS RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

FOR all the talk of expansive rugby that has emanated from England and Wales this season, the primary objective for both teams will be to win when they meet at Twickenham tomorrow in the second round of the five nations' championship.

If that seems at odds with the sentiments issuing, in particular, from Kevin Bowring, the Wales coach, it is not. "You don't develop as a side by losing," Jonathan Humphreys, the Wales captain, said. "If our best method of winning was to play catch and drive all the time, we would probably revert to it, but we haven't got that armory. "Our best style is to move ball about because that's the only way we can compete with the world's best. We have tried



the slugging game up front, which doesn't work for us, so hopefully we can bring some fresh air to the championship. Humphreys believes that, after defeat by France, the pressure will be on England, but that will only be true if England go into the match uncertain of how they intend to play. According to Will Carling, their captain, they are on an upward curve. "Along the way, we would like to score tries, that's the aim in a rugby game," he said. "I love running rugby, that's what I want to play, but more than anything, I want to win. "You get a sense of adventure through confidence, through a stable side, from the bond that develops among players. You can't just throw that together. This is a growing side, people are keen to have an input and always have been. Wales will be confident in their ability so we

Newcastle last week to assess Underwood's fitness in a season that has left him short of competition on the wings. Underwood moved from Leicester to Newcastle while recovering from a knee operation and Rob Andrew, the director of rugby at Kingston Park, hinted that he may participate in the game on Sunday alongside Andrew himself, Nick Poppellwell, Dean Ryan and Peter Walton. Ireland, who sit this weekend out, will take a close interest in the form of David Humphreys when he plays at stand-off half for Ulster against New South Wales on Tuesday.

The Oxford University student is challenging for a first cap against France on February 17, ahead of Eric Elwood, the incumbent, and Paul Burke.

MORSE



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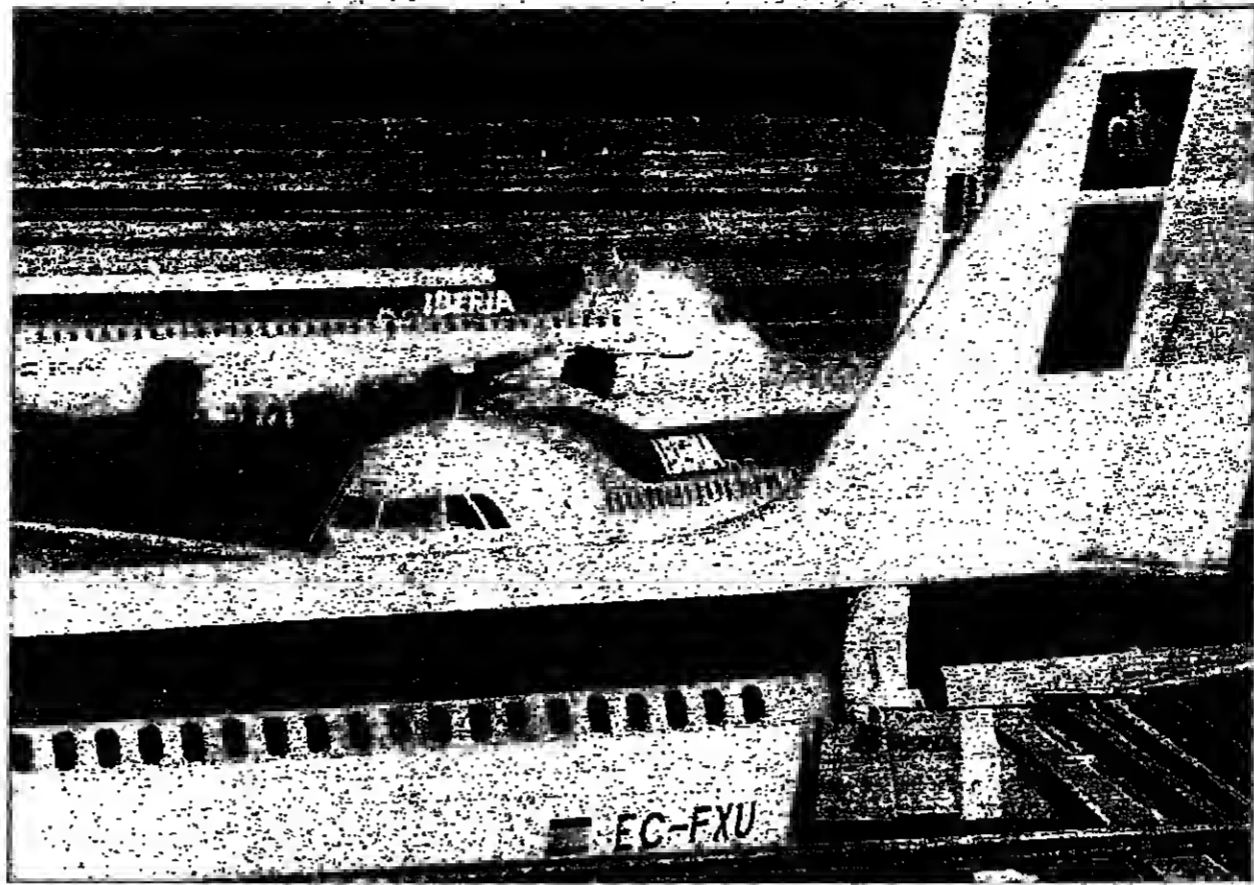
Critics of £440m aid for ailing airline say decision flies in face of fair competition

Britain considers legal challenge to Iberia handout

BY HARVEY ELLIOTT, AIR CORRESPONDENT

THE British Government may mount a legal challenge to the European Commission's decision to let Iberia, Spain's national airline, receive another £440 million in state aid.

Other critics say that, having been given European Commission approval in 1992 for £600 million of state money, the lumbering airline has formally been given the go-ahead to receive another £450 million and an understanding that they will get another £100 million from the Spanish Government next year.



Part of Iberia's fleet at Madrid airport. About 20 aircraft are to be sold and a pay freeze has been imposed

	BRITISH AIRWAYS	IBERIA
Shareholders	241,754	2,400,000
Turnover	£7 billion	£2.8 billion
Debt	£3.7 billion	£1.2 billion
Operating profit	£881 million	£32 million
Pre-tax profit	£327 million	£268 million loss
Aircraft	282	57
Passengers	30.5 million	13 million
Average loads	71.8 per cent	68.8 per cent
Destinations	169	73
Flights per day	1,000	450
Employees	53,000	23,578

thing to heaven because the son is always sitting at the right hand of the father. Iberia says that because Spain is on the periphery of Europe, it cannot compete with the dominant northern airlines such as BA. It does not have a global network of routes and often has to fly on unprofitable ones.

The money Iberia has received is not state aid, the airline argues, but has been raised by Tena, the quasi-governmental holding organisation that has sold other state-owned enterprises and is using the proceeds to keep Iberia alive until its restructuring plan can take effect.

has an 86.4 per cent state holding, Sabena 62 per cent; Finnair 61 per cent; Austrian 52 per cent; SAS 50 per cent; and KLM 38 per cent.

National interests prevail in Brussels battles for state subsidies

BRUSSELS yesterday shrugged off the row over the EU Commission's decision to allow the Spanish state to shovel £440 million into Iberia. Officials acknowledged, however, that, coming on top of a string of similar cases, the Iberia rescue has dented the Commission's credibility.

Coming after previous cases involving the prestige of national bodies, the handout has dented the Commission's credibility, Charles Bremner writes.

There was just no way that Brussels was going to put to death a national flag-carrier, however lame it looks. Such realism helped to swing Sir Leon Brittan, Britain's senior commissioner and former competition chief, behind the Iberia decision, which was taken unanimously by the 20 commissioners.

British taxpayers will help to finance a new Jaguar plant at Castle Bromwich, Birmingham. Without the money, Ford, Jaguar's American parent, said it would switch production to America. Delays in the approval were ascribed by some in Whitehall to annoyance in Brussels over the Government's obstruction in other EU decisions.

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Italy gets new Prime Minister

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

PRESIDENT SCALFARO yesterday ended weeks of political uncertainty by nominating Antonio Di Pietro, a highly respected bureaucrat and constitutional expert, to head a broad-based Government of National Unity in Italy.

Many Italians have reservations about investing too much power in one person, a legacy of the Mussolini dictatorship. Signor Scalfaro looked relieved and said that patience had paid off. His move comes after weeks of speculation after the resignation on January 11 of Lamberto Dini, the interim Prime Minister appointed just over a year ago after the collapse of the centre-right coalition led by Silvio Berlusconi, the leader of Forza Italia.

Shadowy 'fixer' takes top job

LIKE his predecessor Lamberto Dini, Antonio Maccanico has the reputation of being a technocrat and is hence a suitable candidate to pursue Italy's reform process. However, unlike Signor Dini, who alienated politicians while in office, Signor Maccanico has some hopes of gaining all party backing.

acquired the nickname "The Mechanic" not only as a play on his name but also because of his skill in manipulating the government machine. Now, can emerge from the shadows as leader in his own right. He served as head of the Prime Minister's office for Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, who was leader between April 1993 and May 1994.



Maccanico: adept at backroom politics

Spa cures run dry in Kohl's painful cuts

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

GERMAN workers, particularly the rheumatic ones accustomed to regular, paid spa cures, were yesterday up in arms about plans by Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, to cut social welfare spending to keep the country on target for monetary union.

one of the few remaining throwbacks to the leisured 19th century. In the years of the postwar economic miracle, the annual cure provided by the welfare state kept public service and industrial workers going at their breakneck pace.

...calls reform NATO's any role

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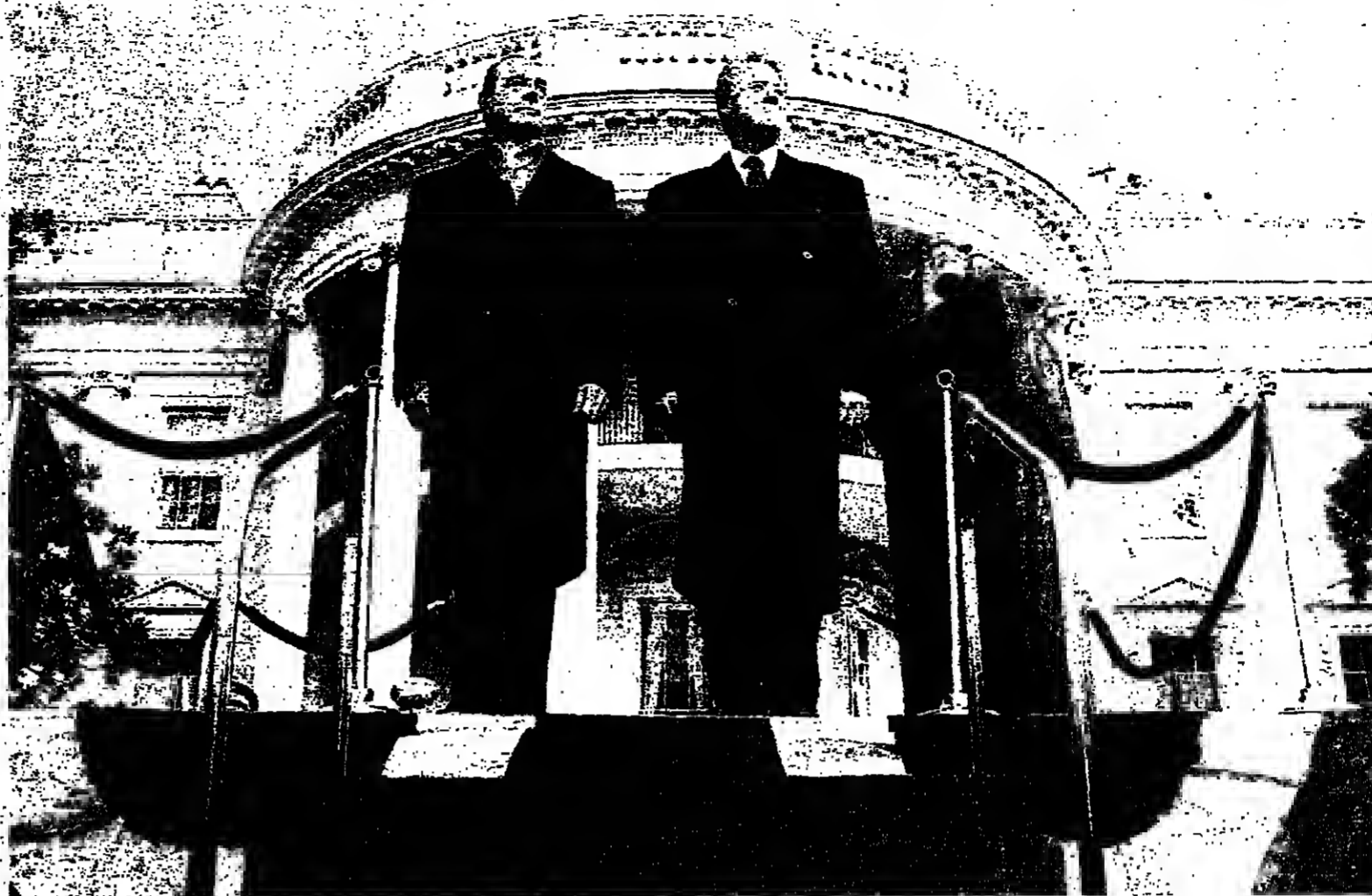


Transatlantic alliance is vital for European security, French President tells Congress

Chirac calls for reform of Nato's military role

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT CHIRAC, on the first state visit to America by a French leader in 12 years, yesterday proposed a transatlantic charter to reform Nato and place more responsibility for security on Europe. In his address to a joint session of Congress before talks with President Clinton, M Chirac called for a renewed partnership between the United States and its Nato allies. He said American commitment, both militarily and politically, was still essential to the stability and security of a growing Europe, but he emphasised that Washington need not always play an active role. "The best security today lies in solidarity," said M Chirac after receiving a standing ovation from the Republican majority on Capitol Hill. "The reform of Nato must also enable the European allies to assume fully their responsibilities, with the support of Nato facilities, wherever the United States does not wish to engage its ground forces." Thirty years after de Gaulle had withdrawn French forces from Nato, he said, France was once more at the heart of the alliance. In reforming Nato, the French President recommended the adoption of a charter as a "solemn sign of the vitality of our alliance" and a pillar of global leadership in the 21st century. An enlarged European Union and a single currency would be a natural part of European progress. Already, M Chirac said, there was a balance between the two continents with three million Europeans working in American companies and the same number of Americans working in Europe. The joint military action in Bosnia-Herzegovina between Britain, France and America underscored the need for Nato to adapt similarly in terms of security. "To a universe that is no longer that in which it was born," M Chirac said, "I call for a renewed partnership between Europe, engaged in its own construction, including in the field of defence, and our North American allies." A number of Democrats had boycotted the address yesterday, claiming that M Chirac's proclamation on Monday to abandon nuclear tests had come too late in the wake of six French experiments in the South Pacific. He nevertheless received warm applause after making a pledge that France had finished its nuclear testing "once and for all". Republicans have long admired the "bulldozer" style of M Chirac's foreign policy which, before recent American intervention in Bosnia and Ireland, had been a refreshing contrast to the wavering image of Mr Clinton. For his part, M Chirac has been a staunch admirer of America since his sojourn at Harvard in 1953. He washed dishes at Howard Johnson, was briefly engaged to a girl from South Carolina who called him "honey chile" and wound up in New Orleans courting such jazz greats as Cab Calloway. Despite the warmth of his reception, particularly from Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, M Chirac touched on several areas which will undermine the more radical isolationist programme of some Republicans long opposed to American intervention in the world and still influential of M Chirac for his influential role in reversing American policy over Bosnia. It was a moral obligation for the West, he said, to help the poorest nations of the world to prosper. He urged Congress to support the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation and other international bodies that brought the alliance closer together diplomatically and in terms of trade. The address, the fourth by a French President since the Second World War, was conducted in French, a language that was studiously absent from the White House menu last night. Under Hillary Clinton, state dinner menus are written in English rather than in the French used in the Reagan and Bush years.



President Chirac, left, and President Clinton outside the White House yesterday during the ceremony to welcome the first French leader in 12 years

WORLD SUMMARY

Internet porn leads to arrest

Tokyo: A businessman was arrested in Tokyo yesterday on suspicion of distributing pornography on the Internet (Peregrine Hodson writes). Hiroshi Kamekura, 28, is the first person in Japan to be arrested in a criminal case involving the Internet. The arrest followed a police raid on his home and the house of a high school student. Mr Kamekura has admitted to police that he knew it was wrong to disseminate pornographic images, but said he was interested by the Internet's operation. Although Japan is one of the most advanced countries when it comes to computers, the Japanese have been slow to catch on to the Internet, not least because most communicators are in English.

Mugabe faces poll challenge

Harare: President Mugabe lost the chance of a walkover in his quest for a third term as Zimbabwe's executive head of state when officials accepted the challenges put forward by Abel Muzorewa, 71, who was Prime Minister of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, and Ndabingi Sithole, 77, the veteran African nationalist leader (Michael Hartnack writes). Observers say neither has a chance of defeating Mr Mugabe.

Bahrain expels Iranian envoy

Bahrain, shaken by demonstrations, expelled an Iranian diplomat for spying (Michael Binyon writes). The Government has virtually named Iran as the instigator of the riots, largely by Shia groups which have called for a restoration of the 1975 constitution. Three dissident Muslim clergy, trained in Iran, were expelled in December 1994.

Dissident in line for peace prize

Peking: China criticised the nomination of Wei Jingsheng, a leading Chinese dissident, for the Nobel Peace Prize (James Pringle writes). It said Mr Wei, sentenced to 14 years' jail last December, was a convicted criminal and not qualified for such an award. He was nominated by 81 members of the US Congress and Japanese politicians.

The father of all ambitions

Jerusalem: A man who has 42 children in the United Arab Emirates, aims to be the country's biggest father (Christopher Walker writes). "If God wills, I may get 60 sons," Salim Juma Mubarak told the daily *Khaleej Times*. His three wives are all expecting babies. He has 22 sons.

Botched brewery visit fails to refresh flagging Dole

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

ROBERT DOLE'S handlers arranged for the 72-year-old presidential candidate to visit a New Hampshire brewery late on Wednesday, then abruptly cancelled the engagement when they discovered it produced a beer called "Old Man Ale". Hours later the visit was restored after Steve Merrill, New Hampshire's Governor and leading Dole supporter, argued that to be seen drinking the age issue would look even worse. Mr Dole gamely held up a bottle of "Old Man Ale" for the cameras, tasted it, and declared it "young and fresh". This botched outing underscored how everything is suddenly going wrong for Mr Dole after months as the Republicans' undisputed frontrunner. A *Boston Globe* poll yesterday gave Steve Forbes, the free-spending publishing tycoon, a nine-point lead over Mr Dole in New Hampshire with less than three weeks until that state's primary. A second, more reliable poll gave Mr Dole a six-point lead over Mr Forbes, but everyone agrees the race has narrowed dramatically over the past few days. In Washington, Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, further boosted Mr Forbes's credibility by praising him as a "genuine risk taker" and challenging the conventional wisdom that a political outsider cannot win the Republican nomination. The Republican party's worries go beyond producing a viable presidential nominee, however. Exit polls showed it lost Tuesday's Senate by-election in Oregon because women - infuriated by Republican assaults on social programmes, abortion rights and Hillary Clinton - turned out in unprecedented force and voted heavily Democratic. National polls confirm that the "gender gap" has widened to historic proportions since the Republicans seized Capitol Hill in 1994 and this could cost the party dearly in November's congressional and presidential elections. In Oregon 10 per cent more men voted Republican than Democrat, while 8 per cent more women voted Democrat than Republican. What made the difference was that a remarkable 57 per cent of voters were women. According to *Wall Street Journal* poll in December showed men equally divided between Mr Clinton and Mr Dole, but women backing the President by 54 per cent to 36. They overwhelmingly considered social problems such as education and poverty more important than the Republican priority of deficit reduction. A principal reason the Republicans won Congress in 1994 was a low female vote with a majority of white women voting Republican. Mr Clinton won the White House in 1992 with just 46 per cent of the women's vote. In 1976 men and women voted in identical percentages for Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter.

Monks held over foetus 'swindle'

FROM VUITHA YAPA IN COLOMBO

Tokyo: Police arrested nine Buddhist monks yesterday on suspicion of organising swindles that may total \$200 million (Peregrine Hodson writes). Two of the men are accused of demanding cash for exorcising "bad spirits", including the souls of aborted foetuses. According to Japanese Buddhist belief, the souls inhabit a nether world and prayers, offerings and monetary donations are necessary to help them to a better world. Gishun Nishikawa, a senior monk at Myokakuji temple in Wakayama prefecture and Keijiro Yano, who heads Monganji temple in Nagoya, were arrested on suspicion of fraud. Another seven monks have been arrested in related frauds and swindles at 27 temples throughout Japan. Brother Nishikawa is alleged to have developed a lucrative sideline selling images of the Buddha to women who had abortions, cashing in on their sense of guilt and superstition.

Death toll mounts as seized Tamils name suicide bomber

THE death toll in the bombing at the Central Bank building in Colombo, the Sri Lankan capital, rose to 81 yesterday. Two of the attackers, captured by the public as they fled from the scene on Wednesday, told police that they were members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The two men, known simply as Rasu and Kituu, said the suicide lorry driver was called Raju. The lorry, filled with rice husk, had left Vavuniya in northern Sri Lanka on Monday and had arrived in Colombo the next day. It was escorted to the Central Bank by three triabwars filled with armed rebels. The two captured rebels had a powerful radio receiver, rifles, grenades and suicide kits when they were overpowered. Meanwhile, President Bandaranaike Kumaratunga said the attack was an act of desperation by the Tigers. She said it had come at a time when the Government was making a genuine effort to find a lasting solution to the causes of terrorism. She said terrorism had to be eliminated and thanked the people for their patience. It is significant that for the first time after a major bomb explosion, the Government did not rush to impose a curfew. The people reacted calmly and members of the minority Tamil community said they did not feel threatened, but were frightened. The attempt by successive governments to show that terrorism by a few individuals should not be used to condemn the minority Tamil community seems to have succeeded. The Governor of the Central Bank, A S Jayawardene, said that money in the vaults was safe as were certain vital documents. The activities of the bank would be back to normal in a few days. Mr Jayawardene said that of the bank's 2,300 employees, about 1,800 worked in the bombed building. He said 40 of their staff had died and 152 were injured. Banks and business houses functioned as normal yesterday except for those in the immediate area of the blast. But traffic on the main road past the president's residence of Temple Trees, near the British High Commission, which was reduced to one lane each way from last year, will be further restricted. Only cars will be allowed to use the road from Friday. Meanwhile, hospital authorities said 53 of the 81 dead had so far been identified. Soldiers and firemen who began clearing the rubble yesterday feared there may be more bodies buried under the wreckage, though the chances of finding anyone alive was described as "very remote". Hospital authorities said the majority of the more than 1,400 people injured were treated for cuts from glass. Doctors at the Government General Hospital said they had never experienced so many people needing medical attention simultaneously, but that they had coped.



How Dunhill viewed glamour in the 1950s

Videos put the fire back into smoking

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

SMOKERS in America, besieged by the anti-nicotine lobby and clean-air fanatics, are buoying their morale by watching "cigarette videos". The 30-minute films, distributed discreetly among addicts of the weed, show women doing little more than smoking a succession of cigarettes. In modern America there are few things more wicked. Edward Luissier, a shopkeeper from Oklahoma City, has made a selection of eight films which are selling in increasing numbers to embattled smokers. The \$25 (£16) movies feature fully clad women lighting up and then smoking as many as ten cigarettes. The films concentrate on smoking techniques, such as the "French inhale", once popular on the silver screen. The smoke is exhaled momentarily from the mouth, and then inhaled briskly up the nostrils. Some of Mr Luissier's films dwell on packet opening, or the tapping out of the first cigarette. Mr Luissier, 42, who learned to appreciate Winston cigarettes while a sergeant in the US army, took his inspiration from hazy memories of New York in the 1950s. "I have tried to recreate all those elegant women who used to smoke, wearing veiled hats and opera gloves," he said yesterday. He researched the photographic techniques of old black-and-white

portraits and invited female friends to sit for his cameras. The films bear their names, for instance *Paula* and *April*. His typical customer, he said, is "at the upper end of the bell curve, intellectually". Mike Williams, editor of a pro-smoking newsletter, *Smoke Signals*, said that a number of such videos were being made, and sold healthily. A very few, made by companies separate from Mr Luissier, contain mildly suggestive moments, but most of them eschew sexuality. Professor Richard Klein, of the French (Gitanes) department of Cornell University, New York, said: "The anti-smoking people have only glamourised smoking."

Space frontier pushed back

BY NIGEL HAWKES SCIENCE EDITOR

AMERICAN astronomers have discovered the most distant galaxy yet, some 14 billion light years from the Earth. Its huge distance means that it must have formed very early in the history of the universe, perhaps no more than a billion years after the Big Bang. The discovery was made by astronomers from the California Institute of Technology, using the world's largest optical telescope in Hawaii. Dr Thomas Barlow, one of the team responsible, says that the galaxy was found when the astronomers were observing an even more distant object, a quasar. What the astronomers see, he says, is "the shadow of the galaxy in the spectrum of the quasar". The observations, reported in *Astrophysical Research Letters*, enable the galaxy to be dated by measuring its red shift - the amount by which its light is shifted towards the red end of the spectrum. Dr Barlow said: "This is essentially the highest red-shift galaxy that we've detected, which means it's the closest to the beginning of the universe." The newly discovered galaxy has some similarities to more recent galaxies, including the Milky Way. But the galaxy has quantities of carbon, oxygen, silicon, aluminium and iron only one half to 1 per cent of those in the Milky Way. This confirms that the light we are seeing came from the galaxy when it was very young, and had not had time for the stars it contains to generate heavier elements.

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Small body, big voice, big heart

THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW



Thomas Quasthoff is a world-class singer first — and a thalidomide victim second

The most remarkable thing about Thomas Quasthoff is his voice. Not just his singing voice, but his speaking voice, which is rich and deep, punctuated with bursts of stentorian laughter that seem fantastically vigorous coming from one so small.

Wednesday night's applause, at the end of his London debut recital at the Wigmore Hall, was tumultuous. As he walked on stage and began to sing Schubert's *Ganyed*, tears started in many eyes. He gave us Prometheus, the Erl-King, the Dwarf. His choice of songs — especially sardonic, perhaps, was Goethe's *Grenzen der Menschheit* ("Man's Limitations"): "For no mortal shall measure himself against the gods" — affected the audience deeply, and set them pondering on the courageous spirit of a singer who has overcome the most daunting of limitations.

Quasthoff was born near Hanover in 1959. His mother had taken thalidomide (the drug prescribed to combat morning sickness in pregnancy, which resulted in terrible growth defects in otherwise perfectly healthy babies) and Thomas was an early victim. "A pioneer," he says with a burst of laughter, "a nice word for a bad fact." His tiny hands grow straight from his shoulders. His legs are dwarfishly short. But his lungs are strong,



Thomas Quasthoff couldn't study at a music college because the rules insisted that students of singing must also play an instrument, and there were no concessions for a boy without arms

his face is handsome, his mind razor-sharp, he is the most wholeheartedly enthusiastic man you could meet and, of course, he has this extraordinary voice.

Nobody could spend a lifetime dwelling on misfortune and he is quick to dismiss the subject — after a brief passing reference to the powerful pharmaceutical industry that allowed a drug to be marketed even after it was suspected of causing disability. "That is what you call capitalism I think. Heh heh!" He has to live with "the fact" every day. So he

is thankful for his voice, and for loving parents who encouraged him.

He started as a boy soprano in a choir at 14. There was constant music at home: piano, saxophone, clarinet; he grew up hearing Mozart and Bach, his elder brother's Jethro Tull records, his own collection of jazz. He wanted to study at a music college, but the rules insisted that students of singing must also play a musical instrument. No special concession could be made for a boy without arms. Instead, he read law at univer-

sity, and later worked in broadcasting.

But he never gave up singing; he took private lessons, and is glad of it. "I have had time to develop my voice in quiet, and not be influenced by the intrigues of the music high school. Others study for three or four years, then go in large opera houses and have to sing parts that are much too difficult for their voice, and their careers are often very short."

He owes his technique to a brilliant voice teacher, Charlotte Lehmann. "And I think my way of singing is very

influenced by my own life, my own feelings, troubles, happinesses. At 36 I am intelligent enough to know what is important and what is not."

The turning point in his life was 1983, when he won first prize in the ARD International Music Competition in Munich. "I ask myself, do I win this competition because I am talented? Or do I have a bonus for my disability? But I think my life since then is a confirmation of the jury's decision. Sometimes a person wins a competition and after a few years, nobody remembers the name."

His hands flutter expressively as he talks. "I am able, really I am ABLE, to enjoy. And that makes my life very rich. I am a very gifted person! Blessed, I mean."

One blessing is his gregariousness. "If you are not in a good relationship with nature, and with other people, if you are not positive and able to love, then you will never be a good artist, never. It is a

cannot describe. The audience must think: 'Something happens. It is for the audience to say what it is.'

He believes that conquering disability must have given him an added sensitivity.

"Because it's work, and it's not a work that ever finishes. At the moment I have a normal life. I am a successful person, I am very independent, and I get the gift to be loved, the biggest present you can get, bigger than the most successful concert."

The next opportunity he has to hear him is on March 12 at the Barbican, in the presence of the Prince of Wales, when he will sing Mozart with the English Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Piersas Zukerman. He will also sing Britten's *War Requiem* in Edinburgh this

August. He is busy in demand, booked to work via Sir Simon Rattle and Sir Colin Davis later this year.

"Our professional life is not always easy. I love my job but I don't love the business. If I only work with music I have the most beautiful profession in the world, but the bad fact is that agents want money — not in my case, Tania Collette is not only a wonderful agent but a good critic — but some agents think not about the singer but only that he is good for the agency."

"I don't want to get famous. I want to get better. I want to work with good conductors, I never want to be a slave of my music life. My private life, my private love, is as important. I don't want to sing 120 concerts a year and ask myself when I am 53, where did my life go?"

"I am in the world to read, walk, smell, listen, enjoy nature, sit down with the singing of birds and the atmosphere of flowers," (he has a horror of polluted, traffic-clogged cities) "enjoy being with friends, and going to the theatre, and being alone with books, or being together with my girlfriend."

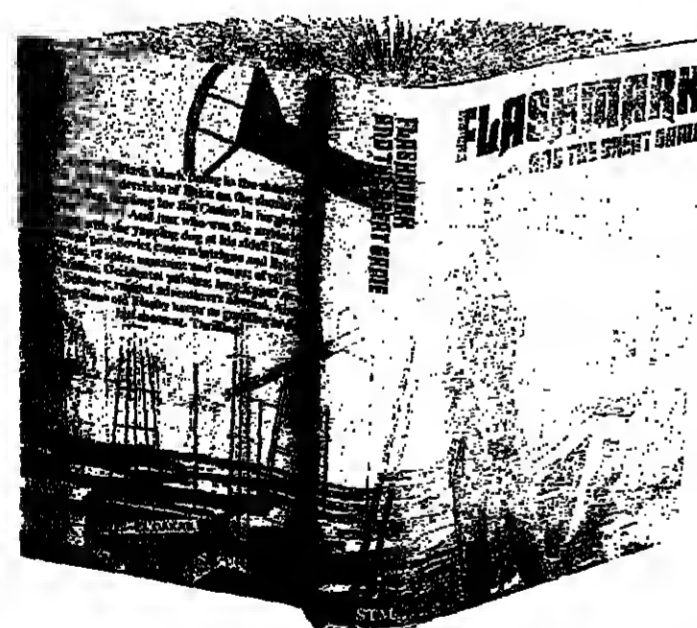
"Sitting with the person you love in the same room, exchanging no words, looking each other in the eyes. The home of my girlfriend is so beautiful to see. How she has arranged the room, so beautiful with old wood, and nice things..." He stops himself. "But that is my private life and it is only mine."

But, he adds, a beautiful room can give peace and pleasure. "A room like this one" (we are in the house of Charles Spencer, the accompanist, who has tastefully converted his Victorian house in Kennington) "reminds you there is so much to enjoy in life, literature, theatre. When I am finished singing I will definitely be a rich person, not in money so much, but I am so interested in everything. I am a man who will never in my life sit down in front of the television and say 'Oh God, let's have a look what's on the other programme'..."

He calls himself a severe critic of other singers. "I am not able to sing every concert in the world for baritone or bass baritone. So I am happy that there are plenty of very good, very beautiful other voices. In Tokyo we had to have a new soprano at the last minute, and when Dorothea Roschmann began to sing at the rehearsal, she was so absolutely brilliant and beautiful it made me cry."

"As I get older, I think somebody up there has a very helping hand to influence my life. Not only in concerts but in my private life I feel that what we call God is very near. Because I've got many presents in my life. I'm thankful every day."

THE SUNDAY TIMES MARK THATCHER SPIES HIS CHANCE



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THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

In the shadow of the stalker

Dr Raj Persaud reports on a frightening and violent obsession



With the Home Office considering new measures to deter stalkers, and the police hunting a stalker who raped a woman while she was under their protection, the need to understand this obsessive behaviour is urgent. In 25 per cent of cases stalkers eventually assault their victims.

Although the fan pursuing a celebrity usually grabs the headlines, in half the cases the stalker has had some kind of prior relationship with the victim that has turned sour. Last year two American clinical psychologists, Dr Reid Meloy and Dr Shayna Gothard, published extensive research into the characteristics of stalkers. The vast majority are men, with an average age of 35; most are unemployed, and 60 per cent have had previous psychiatric treatment.

However, compared with other mentally disordered offenders they are usually better educated and of at least average intelligence — 25 per cent were above-average. Their resourcefulness explains the frequent inability of victims to elude capture. Meloy and Gothard uncovered chilling cases in which one stalker posed as a police officer to obtain an address from a motor records department, while another decoded unlisted phone numbers of his victim whenever she changed them by using telephone installation equipment. If they are so smart, however, why do they ignore their

How often do stalkers physically assault their quarry? victims' furious and fearful rejections? They are socially isolated: only one in seven stalkers is married, many have never had a close relationship. Extremely sensitive to personal rejection, their anger at a rebuff often provokes the pursuit, and may provide a defence against loneliness. But what about the cases where victim and stalker have never met at all? Many adolescents go through a brief stage of obsessional following when they pursue pop stars they have never met.

violence, as well as drug or alcohol abuse. Dr Robert Merzies and colleagues at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada

rational infatuation of this kind is usually both harmless and temporary, but psychiatrists are aware that a small group pursue those they idolise with an intensity which reflects a disturbed rationality rather than simple admiration. Some of these suffer from erotomania, a sudden conviction that an older person of high social status is in love with them. The pressing issue for police is to assess which stalkers are likely to be violent. Meloy and Gothard found that the best predictor of a stalker attacking his quarry is a previous history of

have found that if a stalker has delusions about just one person he is likely to be relatively harmless, but if he has delusions about many it strongly predicts violence.

However, the violence is not usually directed at an object of desire, but often those perceived to be standing in the way of the consummation of the relationship. A public figure's partner is particularly vulnerable to violent attack from stalkers of this kind. The powerful emotional needs which underlie stalking explain why the pursuers themselves often have a paradoxical sense of being controlled by their victim, and even claim they were the one trying to end the relationship.

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Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* has made heroin chic. Giles Coren discovers the depressing reality

Why drug addiction is not a style issue



February 23 sees the opening of *Trainspotting*. The film, based on Irvine Welsh's 1993 cult novel, and made by the same team as last year's hippest film, *Shallow Grave*, follows a group of friends through the highs and lows of heroin addiction.

It involves violence, death and the betrayal of friends. So far, so standard. The difference with this film is that while it highlights the pain of heroin addiction, it also makes no attempt to hide the pleasure. And for that reason it is certain to cause controversy.

Already, it has resulted in heroin addiction becoming a style issue. In the magazines considered essential reading among those who think themselves young and hip, there is an uncomfortable element of "heroin chic". In this week's edition of *The Face*, for example, the star of the film, Ewan McGregor, is pictured in wasted fashion, with his physical appearance as an addict described as follows: "To accurately portray junkie and Pot Noodle boy Mark Renton, McGregor has lost nearly two stone and shaved his head. He looks shit and looks great." It is hip, in other words, to be hooked. The piece is called "Hey hey it's the junkies".

On another page, an article about the soundtrack to the film — which is expected to be a huge seller in its own right — is headlined "Smacksonic".

And yet *Time Out* puts McGregor on its front cover, handing some and handing with the words, "Take the best orgasm you ever had. Multiply it by a thousand. You're still overhere near it". Yes, they are lines from the book, but the book surrounds them with 300 pages of grim reality. *Time Out* exploits only the sex appeal. Irvine Welsh never meant for this. And nor, one assumes, did the film-makers.

Honesty, they insist, was a primary concern. Their quest for verisimilitude took them to Glasgow, although the book is set in Edinburgh, because the drug scene there is closer to the way the Scottish capital was in the mid-1980s, when the story is set.

They even used a technical adviser, reformed addict Eamon Doherty, a counsellor at Glasgow's Calton Athletic rehabilitation project. His story is anything but chic.

He was a heroin addict for seven years; his brother died of an overdose last April.

"He started when he was 15, about a year before me," says Eamon, who speaks with evangelical enthusiasm. "He would have been 33 now, but he knew what he was doing. It's no use complaining. I got into it myself through other drugs I had been doing since I was 12 or 13. I thought it was great at first, when I had the money. And then I started on selling drugs, and stealing from my family, and my standards went the same way as my other possessions."

"Then I had a collapse just before my 18th birthday, and spent nine weeks in hospital with septicaemia. They had a priest in to give me the last rites. And when I recovered, I was back on it as soon as I got out. After that it was no fun anymore. I was just doing it to get normal. It was seven years before I stopped."

On the film set Eamon supervised the injection scenes — into prosthetic arms — and helped the actors to tune their physical reactions to the drug. "The film was so realistic it was frightening," says 24-year-old Darny Jackson, another former addict. "It took me right back to the days when I was on it. All of us from the club who saw it felt the same. The first feelings were that good, the reality of it was that bad."

Eamon says: "If I was making the film, I would end with rehabilitation. But then no one would go and see it, would they? Nobody wants to go and see a man sitting in his room talking about his problems. When I spoke to *The Face* I had no idea they would do this. They've tried to write down my accent. It's all 'oh aye the noo' as if I was thick or something."

"They might think Ewan McGregor looks good," he says, "but in truth if he was really an addict he'd be physically, mentally and spiritually dead. You don't eat or wash. Your whole body breaks down — 82 per cent of jagers [addicts who inject] here have



Ewen Bremner as Spud and Ewan McGregor as Mark Renton in *Trainspotting*

hepatitis C, and they say only 1 per cent are HIV positive. Well, they are transmired in the same way, and HIV has been around longer. So you can work it out for yourself."

The mood at the rehabilitation project is upbeat, but the stories are dismal. David Main, 24, played football for Celtic under-16s and the Scottish youth team. Then he started on the drugs, missed a trial for the Celtic senior team, and it was all over. He is the same age as Ryan Giggs.

If their stories are sad, sadder still are the orses of those still dependent on heroin. An hour or so before addict Joey passed out, he had been selling copies of the *Big Issue* at Glasgow Central Station. Like 90 per cent of Glasgow's vendors, he sells the magazine to pay for his addiction.

From the station he walked to Posil to buy his Dan Mac ("Dan Mac, man, Smack"). He had looked drawn and hollow at the station, a dozen miserably hard years older than his

31. We talk in a tenement block, where the windows are not glass but sheet steel. "Welcome to the real world," Joey says. "This is the badlands. I love it here. Dodging the bandits and all. That's what it's all about."

"But I've got my kit. And nobody can take it off me. I've got 43 stitches here in my face. 30 on the outside, 13 on the in. They gave it to me two months ago, but they didn't get my kit. And they didn't get it when they used a machete, or when they stabbed me here [he shows the scar in his back], or here [in his abdomen]. I'm only nine stone, and I'm sick. But no one has ever got my stash," Joey says.

He delves into the washbag he carries with him everywhere and pulls out a medical swab. "They give you these at the needle exchange to clean your arm with before you inject, but we don't use them for that

They're full of alcohol, so they burn great for cooking up your kit. I couldn't bang it in my arms. I can't use them for another six months, because I've got no veins left there. And you've got to be careful to hit a vein. Sometimes you think you've hit one, when you haven't, and the next day it swells up like a golf ball. But I cut out all my own abscesses with a knife, I don't bother with doctors." He shows off the abscess scars on his legs, and no one would mistake them for the work of a doctor.

"It was about 1980 when I started jaggling. I was living with my ma and da but most of the time I was in this house with a lot of 25 to 35-year-olds. They were always well out of it, and didn't interest me too much. And then someone said 'Give the wee man a bit'. They put a tie round my arm, and I looked away while they gave me a £2 bit. I was telling them to hurry up and get it over with, and they said 'it's done'. Next thing I came round and I was shitting this 35-year-old

bird. I thought 'this is it', and next night I was round there asking where to get more.

"I was still at school at the time, and soon everyone was doing it, that's how it was then. I worked as a roofer for a time, but when things got really bad I couldn't do that anymore," Joey says.

"So I started stealing. I never rob from my own kind, never rob from the poor. I go up to Bearsden and King's Park and rob the TV people and the footballers. I'm a regular in the prisons. My last stretch was 18 months, but it's not so bad."

"The kit's easier to get inside than it is outside. Your lumber comes in and you kiss her, she passes it into your mouth, you swallow, and next morning you take it out. And when the book came out and we heard it was about jaggling, everyone wanted it. There was a copy on my landing, and it was five months before I got a read."

Joey adds: "It's brilliant. Being an addict is just like it says in the book. I'll never get off it now. My sister died of it two years ago, but my younger sister is 21 and has never smoked a joint. I'm so proud of her, because smack is back now in a bad way."

"For a while the kids were just E-ing, but now they do heroin to come down off the Ecstasy, and it's in all the clubs. They start smoking it, and they think they're not junkies. But when their tolerance gets up, they jag. And that's it. They'll all end like me. It's a sad existence, but I'm not looking for pity, I know what I'm doing. I'm too far gone for that. I'm a lost cause."

He went back to the station, and began his selling again. Another six or seven hours, another £25, another quartergram. That is how his life is for him, a cycle of scrounging and injecting, or the horrors of withdrawal. There is nothing else left.

This, according to *The Face*, is "shit and great".

Reformed heroin addict Eamon Doherty acted as a technical adviser on the film

EVEN THAT clever cookie Wittgenstein never solved the eternal riddle that keeps philosophers awake at night: why do children have to have parents?

Or, to put it in technical philosophical jargon: why do some poor kids have to have plonkers for parents who dress them in Timberland shoes, Calvin Klein jeans and Ralph Lauren shirts before taking them off for lunch on Saturdays to a Covent Garden restaurant that isn't designed for two-year-olds?

Few two-year-olds are ready for sophistication. To a two-year-old, grissini are just rusks for the overfed, fried calamari tastes like Chicken McNuggets that have gone off, and fish fingers are a godsend. If God wanted two-year-olds to eat goujons of sole, he would have made all children French.

In France, or Italy, or China you see restaurant tables thronged with lunchers spanning three generations, with grandpa sitting calmly next to his grandson. But in England, when certain parents take their children to posh restaurants, it's as if they have stepped through Alice's looking-glass into a topsyturvy world where children call the shots. Attention, chairs, cutlery, eyes, everything focuses on the child. Like solicitous courtiers re-



laying the child-king's wishes to the world, parents quiz the child about his desires.

"He wants a Coke," they then bark at the waiter, but double-check just in case. "A Coke? You sure? What about apple juice instead, poppet?"

YOU CAN always tell if these parents are with their first child, because they will ask the waitress to press the chef for a list of all ingredients, in every dish, for fear of polluting their child's body with preservatives or E-numbers.

These are the same parents who, on long plane journeys, lull their babies to sleep by humming African tribal lullabies that someone in their antenatal class told them was the holistically correct way of soothing their baby to sleep.

By the time their third child comes along, even a Malteser-flavoured pizza that has been on the floor more times than Frank Bruno is regarded as highly nutritious, while on aeroplanes the baby is stuffed with high-dosage sleeping

potions the minute the "Fasten Seatbelt" sign goes on.

It's true that children are not the only ones who behave boorishly and prattle all day. MPs do it, and we even pay them to. And of course, there are many restaurant-friendly children who will yelp and hurl linguistic only in certain emergency situations, such as (a) if they're hungry or (b) if they're thirsty.

Another problem with child lunchers is that they can't distinguish between "laughing at" and "laughing with", which is irritating when you want to make a specific point of laughing at them in what you regard as a superior, adult sort of way. Also, kids never have any spicy gossip.

But many adults don't mind such company. They look at a rich, spoilt child squawking "I prefer the chips at Le Caprice", and all they see is someone who is probably easy to fleece at poker. But don't count on junior's generosity. However big a kid's trust fund, somehow he never picks up the lunch tab.

Is someone poaching your nest egg

At the moment, you probably keep your savings in a Bank or Building Society account. It makes sense. Especially if you need money for everyday expenses like bills or small purchases.

However, if you want to build up a lump sum over a few years you might well be losing out. You see, the chances are that whenever you earn interest the taxman will take 20% or more. This can make a really large hole in your savings.

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Philip Howard



The critics hate the stage version of Les Enfants du Paradis - I'll be there

Despite the rude press, I must go to see Les Enfants du Paradis on stage. Usually when the critics slink off to the pub during the last act, their excuse to the paying customers they are forcing to stand up for their excuse is that they have to catch the early editions. But at the first night of Les Enfants, there was a stampede from the Barbican at the long-anticipated interval. And as they fled, the critics sprayed their most patronising insults and I-told-you-so's, and made excuses as feeble as having to make sure that the babysitter knew how to work the television zipper.

So one (perverse) reason for going to Les Enfants in the flesh is to see whether any play can be as bad as the critics allege. Usually the Royal Shakespeare Company can turn even such second-division plays as The Taming of the Shrew or Peter Pan to gold. The company is always interesting, as is Simon Callow. Another reason is that Les Enfants really is one of the best movies ever made, even though everyone says that it is. So the stage version got a passing for lèse-majesté from all who would put it in their top ten for solitary viewing on a desert island.

At the most interesting reason for getting bottom-crumpt at the Barbican is because Les Enfants reverses the usual artistic progression. The luvvies are running backwards, uphill. The Darwinian evolution (or devolution) in the media is: first the book, then the stage play and then the screenplay.

The novel works through words and the reader's imagination. The stage play works through words and the actor's art. The film works through images and the director's eye. "Don't come too close, you'll see through my talent," as John Gielgud said to the lighting cameraman on the set of The Charge of the Light Brigade. The progression used to be, book, play, film - for example from Henry James's Washington Square to The Heiress in three quantum hops.

It is no surprise that the only art medium perfected by the 20th century has reversed the process. Penguin now publishes the book of the film, and it goes to the top of the bestseller lists. Sunset Boulevard and Grease may not be your fûte de champagne, but both soupy offspring of the movies are packing them in. Stage musicals are being made on the backs of Animal Crackers and La Dolce Vita, which will test the scriptwriter, for the words are almost irrelevant by the pictures. In fact the screenplay is far better for Les Enfants than for most films, because it was written by a proper writer, Jacques Prévert. Paris est tout petit pour ceux qui s'aiment comme nous d'un si grand amour. The wild romance of "It's so simple, love." And the actor-laddy Lemaitre demonstrating why Shakespeare does not go in French: De l'économie, Horace, de l'économie. The missus the top-of-war of Old Norse monosyllabic with Romance tetrasyllable of "Thrift, Horatio, thrift." I expect Les Enfants is better than the rants-making's rattle. And anyway I must see whether Baptiste finds Garance in the carnival crowds at the end. Of course he does.



EARLY BLAIR (After Bacon)



LATE BLAIR

More socialist than thou

Pig-headed though he may be, there is a quixotic grandeur about Arthur Scargill and his absurd new party

It is difficult to believe that it was only nine months ago that the great fight over Clause Four was won and lost. Indeed, some of my readers today will be at a loss to understand what the words mean, and many others, when asked what it was all about, would mutter something about Tony Blair and his followers, and leave it at that. And yet it is no exaggeration to say that if the Clause Four battle had been lost, so would have been the chances of a Labour government. Some clause, eh? Let's hear it just once again. It was:

To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry and service.

And that might have scuppered the Labour Party? Well, try a dip in the headlines: "Clause Four is consigned to dustbin of history"; "Triumphant Blair"; "Blair hailed day of destiny".

Or, on the other side of the road, Arthur Scargill denouncing every word Blair speaks: "Following in the footsteps of failure"; "Scargill calls for general strike"; "Arthur Scargill relates the 'new realism' of the Labour leadership directly to the betrayals of the General Strike and the class collaboration of the 1920s".

Er... the 1920s, with or without betrayals, class collaboration and even a General Strike, were roughly three-quarters of a century ago. Surely Arthur Scargill has caught up this far? No, he hasn't. But that is the great thing about Arthur, and the thing I most repectably admire, and the thing I am now going to praise. The praise cannot be undiluted: he has made dreadful mistakes and worse than dreadful mistakes, but take out the darkness, the folly, the waste of words and actions, the quagmires that he has repeatedly led his followers into and there is yet a grandeur even in his absurdities and pig-headednesses. You can see that grandeur very clearly if you put Benn beside Scargill. These men were both entirely on the same side at the same time and in the same way, yet one struts the waters every time he speaks, while the other tries to make a figure. (My eye just then fell upon a tiny cutting: "Arthur Scargill was hissed and slow-

handclapped. Tony Benn sat sullen and silent, surrounded by political enemies.")

And now - the greatest folly imaginable, yet heroic at the same time - Arthur has founded a new party. The Socialist Labour Party it is called, and good luck to it, a great deal of which he will need. Never mind that new parties, in our system, can never thrive unless over decades; never mind that he has now no following to speak of; never mind that he has been thrown out of the real Labour Party (which, I suppose, he will call the fraudulent Labour Party, while no doubt also calling Tony Blair a fraudulent Labour Party leader); never mind that he will become a figure of laughter - never mind all of this and more. Arthur Scargill will not be defeated.

It is a remarkable story, is it not? Consider: when Ted Heath faced up to the miners, he was beaten good and proper, but pretended that he wasn't. When Margaret Thatcher fought them and beat them, it was the end not only for Scargill but for the whole world of coalmining.

But Arthur put his telescope to his blind eye, and - this is the most remarkable part of the story - most of his dwindling band was led by Arthur into quicksands and never seen again, though the dwindling band could see what was happening. Is that not a remarkable essay in loyalty? And doesn't it make Arthur much more heroic, as well as much more daft?

For not only has Arthur established a new party, he is trying it out. I am writing on the eve of a by-election; the election was necessary because of the death of Derek Enright, who had held the seat for many years. It is indeed one of the most solid seats in the country; at the last election, Derek Enright had a majority of 22,000, and the successor, Jon Trickett, can hardly fear his Tory

enemy, who polled fewer than 8,000 votes. But if the Tories is unlikely to dent the Labour armour, what chance has Arthur Scargill?

True, Arthur has not taken the plunge himself, one of his cohorts is standing in for Arthur. The Arthurian candidate is a lady, Brenda Nixon, who fights under the banner of Women Against Pit Closures - hardly a clarification to make the voters come running. She has other problems: there are a dozen or so other candidates, including the National Democrat candidate, the Green candidate, the UK Independence candidate, the Natural Law candidate, the Lib-Dem, the Mark Thomas Friday Nights Channel 4 candidate, and of course our dear old friend, the Lord Sutch Official Monster Raving Loony candidate.

Oh, and I nearly forgot: the Tory candidate.

Now, what chance has Brenda Nixon to carry off the prize? Yet there she goes, with her campaigners in hopes of carrying off the prize. And she is going into the fight with banners fluttering - what does that say about Arthur Scargill?

Well, one thing it says about Arthur Scargill is that he lives in the past, but knows that the past has gone by the way. When he is jeered at, and he now gets more jeers than cheers, he says: "They were the same words used against Keir Hardie in 1888 when he first stood as an independent socialist. Now everyone wants to claim Keir Hardie as their own. People should learn a bit of their history." Yes, they should. But the tiny remark I have quoted - "They were the same words used against Keir Hardie in 1888..." also contained a few more words, which I left out: "... one of the founding fathers of the Labour Party..." For, you see, most

people today do not know who Keir Hardie is.

You and I would think that coalmining was a trade no human being should be obliged to take; indeed, I remember an article I wrote which finished with a prayer that it would be eliminated for ever very soon. Not so the miner; incredibly, he loved his trade, not least because of the tightly-knit communities. Then my prayer was answered, to the dismay of the miners. What does a superannuated coalminer do? Embroider pillow-cases? Draw the dote?

Even Arthur Scargill could not stop the blood-letting as more and more pits were closed; but at least he could denounce his enemies - those enemies who had given in and let Clause Four go. Now he is very close to making himself a fool; his new party will get a handful of votes - about the same number as Lord Sutch - and his new "party" will wither on the vine. What, I wonder, does he feel, or indeed say, about the pit which was taken over by a group of superannuated miners (nobody wanted it), who worked their butts off and not only made it the last pit in their area, but made a handsome profit too? Arthur speaks:

I feel a free man, like I've been let out of jail. There's a sense of relief. I feel almost exuberant, to be campaigning for a new party. We are all singing from the same socialist hymn-sheet - and we're not worried about offending the spin-doctors!

But Arthur must know, even as he hides the truth from himself (he cannot hide it from others) that the very best he can hope for with his absurd Socialist Labour Party is a couple of deposits held, and even that is very unlikely.

Go back to the fight over Clause Four: if the man in the moon trained his telescope on the proceedings, he would be entirely nonplussed. He would see several camps, all on the same side of the battle, but with half of them fighting the other half. I dare not ask Arthur point-blank whether it is better to have a milkshop Labour government or another Tory government; I say that I dare not ask him, not because he would hit me on the head with a rolling-pin, but because I fear he would say "Yes, it is better to have the Tories in again, than to change even one word - nay, one syllable - of Clause Four". And do you know what Mrs Brenda Nixon, the candidate for the SLP, says of the head of the Labour Party? She says: "I haven't an ounce of respect for Tony Blair".

It ain't cricket, cobber

Simon Barnes

toasts the

whingeing Aussies

This is one of those moments for feeling grateful to Australians. As the grim news of the bombings in Sri Lanka tempts us to despair, so the Australian cricketers cheer us with a comic sub-plot. This is nothing less than Shakespeare: the drunken porter, the gravediggers, the Australian cricketers. The single-mindedness with which each set of characters follows its own course, unaware of the priorities of a greater world, grants a welcome moment of relief to us all.

In Colombo, the death toll is horrific, the number of the wounded beyond easy comprehension, but the Aussies respond: what about our cricketers? The Australian Cricket Board goes into a huddle early next week for a good old grumble. They are considering forfeiting their World Cup match in Sri Lanka, which should take place on February 17.

That would mean donating the points to the opposition, and it's the sort of idea they want well ventilated; because they want the world to know that, well, it just isn't right. Compare and contrast with the Zimbabwean team manager, Denis Streak; on hearing the news of the bombings, asked if his team would now consider withdrawing, he said: "We've thought about it. But we come from a country that knows about war and we're not going to worry about a few bombs."

The Australians reject any such blithe acceptance of life's turbulence. Life, after all, shouldn't be like it was in Colombo yesterday. How many times have I heard an Australian explain "It's not fehhhh"? This search for the Protean quality of fairness is something of a national characteristic, but in sport the gold of fairness becomes transmuted, by a sort of reverse alchemy, into the base metal of whingeing.

It was the Australians who first called the settlers from England whingeing Poms. It became accepted myth that Poms always complained and seldom washed. How can you tell that a 747 landing at Sydney is from London? It carries on winning after the jets have been switched off. But this eternal complaint about the "Poms is itself a kind of whinge. And when one turns to sport and sets coherent thought aside - the scops for whingeing is unending - and Australians, it must be said, are masters.

Their cricketers are up to their necks in a scandal, with Pakistan, in which they allege that Salim Malik, then Pakistani captain, tried to bribe them to lose a Test match. The Aussies now face death threats on their return to Pakistan.

Long before the Sri Lankan bombing, the Australian board said that any player who felt he would be in danger at the World Cup, which will be held all over the sub-continent, was free to withdraw without penalty.

Death threats, however, occupy the Australian mind only when they fear themselves away from the awkward right arm of Muttiah Muralitharan. Australian umpires believe that this Sri Lankan slow bowler gives extra zest to his leg-break by throwing the ball - which is illegal, of course. Yet legal or not, Muralitharan is hardly the world's most ferocious bowler. Bringing the might of cricket law to bear on the rather hapless young fellow is a sledgehammer and nut situation. But it's not fehhhh, you see...

Meanwhile, David Caropese, the Australian rugby player, a man touched by greatness - has been whingeing on about the English rugby team. Again. "English players can't make decisions, when the pressure's on. Rob Andrew has gone, but nothing has changed." This crosses the boundary from rival-baiting to whingeing, especially when you recall that the last time England played Australia at rugby union, it was the quarter-final of the World Cup and England won - thanks to a last-minute drop goal from Rob Andrew.

Australian whingeing is an ancient tradition. The longest whinge in sporting history goes back to 1932-33, when Douglas Jardine captained England in Australia at cricket. What will be remembered forever as the Bodyline series. Today, even the most fastidious would not object to the bowling. Only two batsmen were injured in the entire series: that can happen in one day in a modern game.

But physical assault was not the real issue. The issue was planning, and the plan's accurate, professional execution. England sought to nullify the opposition's greatest weapon, the genius of Don Bradman. It was not the bowling of Harold Larwood that was vicious: it was the thinking of Jardine.

This signalled the end of sport as the world then knew it. Sport was no longer fun: not at the highest level. It was instead a fierce and terrible drama which stripped bare the nature of its participants. It destroyed some and gave others impossible glory. Sport became the most brutal examination of character.

Modern sport is often exhilarating, often profoundly satisfying. But it is seldom much fun: not for the participants, anyway. It matters too much for that. So perhaps the Aussies were right to whinge - are right to carry on whingeing.

True whingeing is nostalgia for a world that never existed; a world when everything was fun and everything was fair. In my opinion, from the Colombo *cri de coeur* to the Campos rent-a-whinge, there is a yearning for a better world. Life shouldn't be like this, it's not fehhhh. And in the end, there is a kind of nobility in it.

Poor John

A SENSITIVE chap, John Major. The latest spate of poisonous stories about a new chasm between himself and his Chancellor has jangled a raw nerve.

On Wednesday, he invited a dozen MPs to lunch at Downing Street - trusted souls, mostly, although there were one or two licensed dissenters. And without a by-your-leave, he burst into a torrent of denial. He insisted that he and Kenneth Clarke stood foursquare together (Winnie-the-Pooh and Piglet come to mind) over Europe and the economy.

"It was extraordinary," says one of the hunchers. "Nobody was even suggesting there was anything in the stories. He just came out with it, got it off his chest."

The assembled audience clucked and nodded sagely as they listened to his bafflement and surprise at the appalling suggestions of a rift. But as they left they were in broad agreement - the PM doth protest too much.

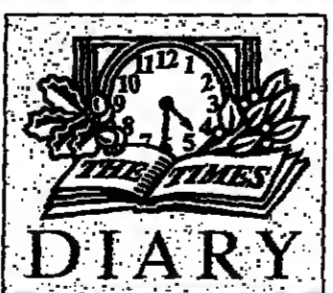
● The Princess of Wales is still discussing the Queen's letter urging her to divorce. Perhaps she is stalling until after a two-day conference at the Park Lane Hotel next month before making a

decision. One of the organisers is her solicitor, Mishcon de Rey. And the subject? "Big Money and International Divorce".

Longueurs

THE GUEST of honour at the opening night of Simon Callow's interminable new play, Les Enfants du Paradis, was Patricia Quinn. Callow has dedicated the work to her late husband, Sir Robert Stephens.

THE SUBSIDIES IN STRAIN STAY MAINLY ON THE PLAINES



Though delighted by the dedication, this put her in a tricky position - she had to sit through the entire four-hour work. "It's a very difficult play to stage," she says with tact. "There are 60 scenes in it. The real trouble is that it's a film, not a play."

Adrian Noble, the RSC's artistic director, admitted yesterday that Callow "could perhaps have cut it a bit more"; and even the star turn in the play, Joseph Fiennes (brother of Ralph), said the length of the play made for difficulties. "I think he could have been a bit more ruthless," he said. "It's a bit of a problem, the logistics of getting home after the show."

Vic and Bert

THE LATEST venue for romantic encounters in London is the Victoria and Albert Museum on Wed-

nesday nights. Although the museum rejects any suggestion of a "singles' night", it is encouraging lonely hearts to dally in its vaults. The museum reports that as a result of its Friends' evenings on Wednesday, one couple are married and many others are courting. Now it has opened up evening romance to the general public.

Last Wednesday night, the place hummed with young bucks. Advertisements proclaiming the romantic potential have been running in the personal columns of Time Out, the London listings magazine. And a Valentine's Day seminar on kissing in art will add to the atmosphere. "It's a friendly atmosphere and people feel encouraged to talk to each other," explains the museum.

Heart attack

LADY ROMSEY, the elegant wife of Earl Mountbatten's grandson now identified as the "horse" voice whinnying away for 17 minutes to the Duke of Edinburgh on his mobile phone, has a less than traditional taste in jewellery.



Penny: cheap at the price

ny, picked out on it - the female equivalent of a gold medalion on a hairy chest. The former Penny Eastwood was briefly linked romantically to Prince Charles in 1975, and he is known to have a penchant for

jewellery incorporating names. Mary Spillane, the image expert from Colour Me Beautiful, is astonished: "It's a very adolescent thing to wear."

● The Duke of Edinburgh is not the only person to have had trouble with his mobile phone. In a written answer in Hansard, Robin Squire, the Junior Minister for Education and Employment, said that ministers had twice had mobile phones "cloned" by fraudsters. And each time the phone in question belonged to Robin Squire.

High pitch

THE BEAUTIFUL shrine of Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been visited by many eminent Roman Catholics, but this summer it can expect three more in the three tenors - all of whom are themselves Catholics.

Pavarotti, Domingo and Carreras have agreed to sing there in July to mark the 50th anniversary of the first visions of the Virgin Mary. The concert, to be transmitted across the world by satellite, will tell the story of the shrine since 1981, when six children claimed that the Virgin Mary had appeared.

P.H.S



SPANISH MALPRACTICE

A bad decision for Iberia, Spain and Europe

The EU Transport Commissioner, Neil Kinnock, was asked to rule this week on whether Spain should be allowed to break its promise to its partners and pump £440 million into its bloated national airline, Iberia. Presented with an opportunity to fight for a level runway for Europe's airlines, Mr Kinnock flinched and found excuses to let Spain bend the rules. Iberia, on its record of monumental incompetence and waste, does not deserve to survive under its present ownership. Since the Greek, Portuguese, Belgian and Irish airlines are queuing up for extra aid which they too promised they would not need, this decision is a grim precedent — as politically feeble as it is economically monstrous.

Those who defend the European Commission's "pragmatism" rest their case on two arguments: that Iberia has been given less money than it requested and on specific restrictive conditions which are held to mean that the proposed investment is identical to a private-sector decision. This is backed by another, unstated, argument which holds that the Commission, battered by recent unpopularity, should not force a high-profile nationalised company into sale or bankruptcy while every politician from Stockholm to Seville is urging action to falling down the continent's debt queues.

The Commission, which wields huge powers against monopolies and the abuse of government subsidies to private businesses, is making a grievous error. The EU treaty encourages the commissioners to balance legal, commercial and political factors in their state aid and competition decisions. But to grant most of Iberia's request is both against the treaty's spirit and against the interests of Europe's air travellers. Any prospect of lower fares fades yet further.

Nor does this week's decision in Brussels give any real help to the Iberia employees whose jobs have been "protected". Three

and-a-half-thousand of them will lose their jobs anyway during the next two years, and the remainder will have to wait even longer for the arrival of a disciplined and competitive management which can truly secure jobs by making the airline competitive in the global market. Meanwhile, the rest of the Spanish economy suffers from the diversion of capital by the Government into a plainly inefficient enterprise.

Last year British Airways made a profit of £301 million without state subsidy; Iberia made a pre-tax loss of £269 million. According to Mr Kinnock, the principle of phasing out airline subsidies should give way to the "market investor principle". This "principle", which has put down sturdy roots in European law, allows state aid to a company if the State is behaving as a private-sector investor would. But, if the Spanish Government's investment in Iberia were a sound bet, the state holding company would not need to be making it. The private-sector market would provide investors and the Government could withdraw. Iberia is a poor investment because it is too badly run to make money for its investors.

British Airways has already begun legal action against the Commission for its supine permission to the French government to put £2.3 billion into Air France, currently losing around £50 million a month. Given the Commission's one-off determination not to waste any more money on Iberia, British Airways should have strong arguments to mount a parallel legal challenge. The Commission's collective feebleness in the face of Spanish blackmail also raises a wider point about its powers under the EU treaty. Powers to police state subsidies are among the strongest that the Commission has. Why should national governments grant it any increased powers at this year's review of the Maastricht treaty when existing powers are used in such an anti-European way?

DEGREE QUALITY

Fees may be the future, but not at a flat rate

University vice-chancellors meet today to decide if they should end Britain's tradition of free access to higher education. Support seems solid for a proposal to charge £300 as the price of a place at university. The proposal is crude but it has one merit: it focuses attention on the need for further reform in academia — to improve financing, defend standards and allow liberal learning to flourish in our finest institutions.

The flat-rate fee is a tactic adopted to bully the Government into reversing the spending constraints imposed on universities. Disappointed by a budget that cut higher education expenditure by 7 per cent, and envisaged a further 6 per cent cut in 1997-98, the vice-chancellors have counter-attacked. They hope the prospect of a hefty bill arising at thousands of middle-class homes next September will be enough to force a government retreat.

The Government may hope that some of the vice-chancellors will prove faint-hearted. Less prestigious universities may calculate that a levy will deter applicants and that any fall in admissions will mean large losses, which an extra £300 from each remaining new student will not offset. The Government may also judge that even if the vice-chancellors hang together they cannot all rely on their own governing bodies for support. As any student of C. P. Snow knows, it is a rare head of an academic institution who is truly Master in his own House. The Education Secretary may refuse to bend, knowing that it will be in the interests of some universities to break. But relying on the willingness of weaker brethren to abandon the levy will not be enough.

The current funding troubles are only the most obvious symptom of a much deeper malaise. The Government has congratulated itself on a rapid expansion of student numbers — as though academic productiv-

ity were an end in itself. But the expansion seems to have been accompanied by a decline in standards and erosion of independence.

Universities have relaxed entrance requirements in order to accept ever more students, and extra income direct from the Government. There is little incentive to be selective: thus, even though entrance numbers increase, so too does the proportion of those dropping out. Worse still, there is worrying evidence that students now face far less stringent final examinations. As numbers overall have gone up, so too have the numbers of students who secure first-class degrees. The proportion of firsts has remained constant over the last four years despite a 65 per cent increase in undergraduate numbers. It seems, at best, curious that so many vice-chancellors should reach a level once the preserve of a genuine elite.

Reversing the cuts might not make universities more choosy, simply more greedy. The most appropriate answer is matching the universities' power to select with a mechanism to make students more discriminating. Harsh Economics may determine student numbers, but Logic should not be neglected. Universities should be encouraged to contemplate top-up tuition fees, but rather than a flat rate these should reflect the quality of the qualification on offer. Of course students from poorer families should be exempt, and many institutions should survive without having to charge, but those from comfortable families should pay if they want excellence. That would remove the need for the better universities to expand needlessly and allow them to maintain their traditional methods of teaching in tutorials or seminars. Reform before the next election is unlikely, but if higher education is to combine the virtues of access and excellence, there must be open minds on entrance fees.

YOUNG MASTERS

Music comes early: painting must wait

An unknown self-portrait by Francis Bacon, painted when he was only 21, has just been found in a private collection of paintings. As Richard Cork writes on our Arts pages today, this is a significant discovery. Bacon was a fussy fellow, whose dislike of his own youthful work drove him to destroy much that he painted before his *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*.

A survivor from those massacres, the self-portrait ought to teach us a little about this tortured artist as a young man. But how much, on its own, can it teach us? As a picture, it is neither original nor attractive, but rather an awkward pastiche of the modes of its time. It has none of the "reek of human blood smiling out" — to use Bacon's own favourite line from *Aeschylus* — that one has come to associate with the painter's familiar oeuvre. If this self-portrait is typical of his earlier work, then the later Bacon is clearly finer art.

This should not surprise us. Painters, like most composers of music, novelists and judges, change with age. And they usually get better. Take Cézanne, a major exhibition of whose work begins next week at the Tate Gallery in London. His early work is dreary, dark and morbid, and unduly concerned with violence. As a painter he found his language only much later in life, with his technique of constricting volume out of brush

strokes. Mondrian changed too — and radically — moving with time from sweet Dutch landscapes to brightly coloured grids and rectangles.

Very occasionally, painters get worse with age. André Derain is an example. A *faune* — and close friend of Matisse in the latter's wildest phase — he was a Young Turk who turned out to be an old bore, ending his artistic days as a Neo-Classical reactionary. Such change in individual style is most easily discerned in art's modern era: for in the days of the Renaissance a young artist was often merely a copyist in the school of a master. A painter's early style declared itself only exceptionally, such as in Leonardo's angel in the painting by Verrocchio.

Painters take longer to mature than composers of music do: and there is more to this assertion than just the example of Mozart. The Viennese prodigy may have composed seven symphonies by the time he was 10 years old — and six operas by his fifthteenth year, including *Mitridate* — but there are others too, including Mendelssohn, whose genius shone earlier than that of any serious painter. Francis Bacon took some while to blossom — if that is the right word to describe paintings such as his anguished, screaming Popes. In that, he was only of his artistic type. The best painters, like their counterparts in wine, mature only with age.

Judgment on a pay rise for MPs

From Mr Norris McWhirter

Sir, Twice before MPs have voted to more than double their salaries (letters and leading article, February 1). In 1954, after a 17-year standstill, they raised their basic pay from £600 to £1,250; while in 1964, after a nine-year standstill, they gave themselves a raise to £3,250. The taxpayer now, however, is presented with the spectre of a doubling from their 1995 raise.

The electorate of taxpayers and others ultimately decide whether a parliamentary candidate receives any salary at all. It is instructive to recall how each MP has regarded his custodianship of our parliamentary, and hence national, sovereignty. We had long regarded the rule of law as dependent upon being governed by consent — i.e. rule by an administration that could be sacked.

On May 20, 1993, our MPs collectively carried the third reading of the Maastricht Bill by 292 to 112. Why, now that they have given away the above rights to overseas institutions that are unaccountable, should they expect to double their remuneration? They have diminished themselves to regional, off-shore councillors in a chamber which some of them plan will take on the ambience of a museum.

If there were any logic or justice, unless they have a change of heart and of spirit, they ought, as in the national crisis of 1931, to vote themselves a pay cut.

Yours faithfully,
NORRIS MCWHIRTER (Chairman),
The Freedom Association,
35 Westminster Bridge Road, SE1,
January 30.

From Lord Mayhew

Sir, I am not a hardship case, and am not complaining, but when I left the House of Commons in 1974, my index-linked pension, based on 27 years' service (including five years as a minister) in 1980, was £4,034 (payable from 1980). It is now £10,118.

I was astonished when MPs recently voted themselves pension increases for their service before 1983, but withheld the increase from former members who had served the same years and paid the same pensions contributions.

I think the less MPs have to do with their emoluments, the better.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER MAYHEW,
House of Lords,
January 31.

From Sir Laurie Magnus

Sir, Many people of quality decide to keep out of politics simply because it does not pay well enough. Prosperity for self and family, which can only be earned elsewhere, comes first.

Some will always say that public service should be more important than money. They echo predominantly Conservative thinkers of the 19th century who felt that MPs should not be paid at all.

But let us not lose the chance to attract greater quality into public life by restricting salaries. If any MP does not wish to accept a pay rise, he or she can always return to the Paymaster General.

Yours faithfully,
LAURIE MAGNUS,
Flat 8, 44 Lower Sloane Street, SW1,
February 1.

From Mr Peter Le Cheminant

Sir, It is to be hoped that the implementation of any increase in the pay of MPs which results from the present clamour is deferred until after the next election. Otherwise the main impact will be to boost the pensions of the substantial number of present MPs who will not return to the House next time round.

Yours etc,
PETER LE CHEMINANT,
23 Weylea Avenue,
Burgham, Guildford, Surrey,
January 31.

From Dr P. J. Fabricius

Sir, The National Health Service has a ready precedent to solve the question of MPs' pay. A realistic salary should be set for those MPs who spend the whole of their time working for Parliament. Every MP should be required to declare in confidence all other sources of earned income.

Those who earn more than 10 per cent of their parliamentary salary from other sources should forfeit an appropriate proportion of the parliamentary salary, as do maximum part-time NHS consultants, despite being required still to devote "substantially the whole of their time" to the NHS.

I have the honour to remain,
Sir, your obedient servant,
P. J. FABRICIUS,
3 Rowhills Close, Farnham, Surrey,
January 31.

From Sir Anthony Beaumont-Dark

Sir, The view that many senior MPs, who should know better, put around that if you paid MPs twice as much you would get better MPs is, at the kindest, nonsense. The opposite in my view is the case: all you will end up with is many more young MPs who have done nothing with their lives except be parasitic.

Your obedient servant,
ANTHONY BEAUMONT-DARK,
124 Lady Byron Lane,
Knowle, Solihull, West Midlands,
February 1.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

The need for a long-term solution to university funding

From The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buckingham

Sir, Simon Jenkins ("Dons must do or die", January 31) hits the nail on the head.

In the last 50 years or so our universities have established a high reputation internationally and have generally provided a high-quality education. At last, people are realising that this reputation is under threat. Student numbers have increased dramatically whilst the unit of funding for teaching each student has been cut by 28 per cent over the last six years.

We cannot reverse this situation by merely tinkering with the funding systems: it needs a totally fresh approach and a new financial mechanism. The only way to break through the present impasse is for students to pay a share of tuition costs.

Students should be supported by some kind of income-contingent loan scheme, the level and timespan of repayment being dependent on the level of earnings. Other measures would have to be taken to protect the less well off: the student might have a voucher provided by the State giving a basic sum of taxpayers' money, and would supplement this with a direct payment backed, perhaps, by a loan.

In this way more resources will be made available to improve the quality of service: the student can choose the university which most suits his interests and the resulting mechanism would free universities substantially from the present bureaucratic system of government funding.

Universities should then move to charging full-cost fees, the level of which will vary according to the nature and quality of the course. Centres of academic excellence in different fields will emerge and will charge higher fees. Demand will begin to be market-led.

Much may be learnt from our experiences at Buckingham. We are the only independent university in Britain

with no direct taxpayers' support. Our fees reflect the costs of providing a high-quality service and personal attention. After 20 years of existence we are in a position to encourage other universities to secure greater independence and to pursue a new funding system for the next century.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD LUCE,
Vice-Chancellor,
The University of Buckingham,
Buckingham MK18 1EG,
February 1.

From Mr Robert Jackson,
MP for Wantage (Conservative)

Sir, The universities should go ahead with their proposed £300 "registration" or "quality maintenance" charge (report, January 20), but they would be well advised to describe it simply as a "fee" and to think of it as initiating a long-term strategy.

So long as the universities' move looks like a calculated pre-election political manoeuvre the Government is entitled to be irritated, and the necessary dialogue between it and the universities about this matter will not work as it should. (Incidentally, neither the universities nor the Government should over-estimate the electoral effects of what the universities are contemplating: the middle-class electorate is more realistic than either perhaps credits.)

The financial problem to which the proposed fee is a solution is a long-term one which will not go away with a change of government: the vice-chancellors should pay attention to what Labour is saying about taxes. Taxpayers simply cannot afford to give a university education to 30 per cent of our young people of the style which it provided for only 10 per cent of them little more than a decade ago.

To work as a long-term policy the private fee needs to be backed up by legislation to extend the student loans scheme to enable it to be used to ad-

vance money for fees. This is why the universities need to talk seriously to the Government, and the Government should listen.

Meanwhile those die-hards among the vice-chancellors who think that £300 a year will choke off demand from potential students should recall that the introduction of student loans coincided with an explosion of demand for higher education. There is also something odd about the idea that a university education might be worthless to a student at a price above £0. It might be asked, anyway, whether such a student would be sufficiently motivated to benefit from a university course.

Your etc,
ROBERT JACKSON,
House of Commons,
January 31.

From Professor Sir Graham Hills

Sir, The vice-chancellors may be unwise to settle for the stop-gap palliative of top-up fees before securing a better basis for their long-term security. At the heart of the matter is the lack of any serious consideration of the true costs and true benefits of higher education.

Who are the customers? Who are the beneficiaries? Should all the beneficiaries contribute to the cost? Is the Government a provider, a customer or a regulator?

Past inquiries have led to the conclusion that government and students are both customers, and that they need to negotiate economic prices with their suppliers, the universities. That is the way to common sense, a proper set of values, quality control, diversity, and an economic basis for extending the scope of higher education.

Yours faithfully,
GRAHAM HILLS,
Sunnyside of Threepwood,
Laigh Threepwood, Beith, Ayrshire,
January 30.

Room for savings on back pain bill

From Professor Michael Rosen and Professor G. Waddell

Sir, Backache is a 20th-century health-care disaster and there is now a revolution in back care. Less than one in 500 (0.2 per cent) of back problems need surgery; even slipped discs usually get better without an operation.

As our excellent series of articles on "Beating back pain" (January 22 and 23) makes clear, doctors are beginning to accept that bed rest is bad. With simple measures to control the pain, and staying active, back pain will usually get better.

If more help is needed to control the pain, then the patient should see a physiotherapist, osteopath or chiropractor for manipulation.

However, some people do not get better and need more help. Time is then vital: once off work for six months, there is only a 50 per cent chance of returning to work. At present, patients may wait months for surgical consultations and high-tech investigations, only to be told that

there is no surgical problem.

A report last year by the Clinical Standards Advisory Group (CSAG) recommended that resources should be shifted to primary care in order to provide early active management and rehabilitation. There is strong scientific evidence for such an approach, and the group's recommendations were supported by the Government, but little is being done to implement our report.

Backache is now costing the UK £6 billion a year; and there is potential for considerable savings. Most NHS services and treatment for back pain are no longer acceptable. There is an urgent need for action, in the form of education and pilot studies, to develop a more effective service.

Yours etc,
MICHAEL ROSEN
(Chairman, Clinical Standards Advisory Group),
GORDON WADDELL
(Orthopaedic surgeon, member, CSAG),
45 Hollybush Road, Cardiff,
January 29.

Haunting smell

From Mr Ron Smith

Sir, Mr B. J. Francis suggests (letter, January 17) that the ghostly smell identified by visitors to this house, which was once Julia Margaret Cameron's home, may somehow be associated with Julia's use of the chemicals for her photography. I myself am not of that opinion: several of us who have experienced the smell (report, January 9) describe it as similar to that of rotting herrings.

The smell only recurs when classical music is played. The ante-room where it occurs most strongly is adjacent to the large entrance foyer where Julia and her guests danced and enjoyed her soirees: it has red quarry tiles on the floor and heavily plastered brick walls with no cracks.

The most recent recurrence was on February 11, 1995, when we were playing a tape of *Vivaldi's Four Seasons*. The smell arose shortly after the music started and lasted until a crew from a cable TV company arrived to do some filming about Julia and the freak happening. They had requested the music for background purposes and we were testing prior to their arrival.

We would dearly love a rational explanation. For the record, it is not the electric lampholders and not the drains.

Yours sincerely,
RON SMITH
(Chairman, Council of Management),
The Julia Margaret Cameron Trust,
Dimbola Lodge, Terrace Lane,
Freshwater Bay, Isle of Wight,
January 24.

Wolves in the wild

From Mr Roger Panaman

Sir, As part of our project to reintroduce wolves to the Scottish Highlands, the Highland Wolf Fund, we often need to dispel the myth that wolves need forests ("Scotland's company of wolves", Weekend, January 27).

They live in all kinds of habitat except tropical rain forest and the most arid desert; they even live in the Arctic.

We do not need to wait for reforestation before we can restore wolves to the Highlands, but we do acknowledge that some people's negative perceptions must change.

Fortunately, a public reappraisal of wolves is slowly coming about as the result of research on wolf behaviour and ecology.

Yours sincerely,
ROGER PANAMAN,
Carnivore Wildlife Trust,
35 Church Street, Kidlington, Oxford,
January 30.

Pay as you view

From Mr S. R. Lancelyn Green

Sir, It's a deal! I will gladly pay £5 for each complete opera I watch on television if Mr Amos (letter, January 30; see also letters, January 27) will pay £5 for each snooker game he watches. That's fair isn't it?

My annual bill will be about £15 or up to £25 in a good year. I wonder what his will be!

Yours faithfully,
S. R. LANCELYN GREEN,
Poulton Hall,
Poulton Lancelyn,
Bebington, Wirral, Merseyside,
January 30.

From Miss Margaret Yates

Sir, I am very happy to pay £12 a month to Cable London, for its enterprising Performance channel offering a nightly selection of opera, ballet, classical music and jazz. As I can no longer afford opera house prices, even in the gods, and, like many other elderly people, no longer wish to go out at night, I consider it excellent value.

Yours sincerely,
MARGARET YATES,
7 The Glade, Winchmore Hill, N21,
January 30.

Bishops' residences

From Mr William E. Bridge

Sir, The letter from the Bishop of Exeter (January 30; see also letters, January 18) highlights the terrible waste that such expensive episcopal residences represent.

Like any other diocese Exeter must have many underused church buildings and halls which would be quite suitable for the business, entertainment and hospitality that he entertained.

Yours sincerely,
WILLIAM E. BRIDGE,
175 Crofton Road, Orpington, Kent.

Lottery and charities

From Mr Robert Ashby

Sir, In addition to lottery grants for which charities must apply (letters, January 19, 29), perhaps Camelot should hold an Arts-style weekly draw of a charity registration number? The winning charity might be awarded £10,000 to its core fund, taken from Camelot's profit.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT ASHBY
(Executive director),
British Humanist Association,
47 Theobalds Road, WC1.

Here today...

From Mr Winston Graham

Sir, Last Friday, January 26, a "snow shower" lasting seven hours, dumped at least six inches of snow on this area of Sussex. Temperature at the time was 25F. Saturday (temp 27F max), in spite of more light snow early, the snow began to go. By Sunday at 2pm (temp 32F max) it was almost gone. No dripping from the roofs: minimal rise of level in greenhouse water butt; wind cold but not sufficient to blow snow away.

So somehow the snow did not melt; it evaporated. How?

Yours etc,
WINSTON GRAHAM,
Abbotswood House,
Buxted, East Sussex,
February 1.

Calling all agents

From Mr Noel Johnson

Sir, I note with interest the item in today's issue about the revival of *Dick Barton, Special Agent* and the announcement of some casting.

It would have been courteous if the BBC had at least given me first refusal of the part.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
NOEL JOHNSON,
(The original Dick Barton Special Agent, 1946-49),
4 Britway Court, Britway Road,
Dinas Powys, South Glamorgan,
January 29.

Lost in translation?

From Dr Robert M. Bruce-Chwatt

Sir, The caption to the portrait on your back page today of a "cow" marooned by flash floods in southern France appears to be bull.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT BRUCE-CHWATT,
York Lodge,
1 York Road, Richmond, Surrey,
January 31.

Business letters, page 25

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

Sports letters, page 37

COURT CIRCULAR

SANDRINGHAM, NORFOLK
February 1: The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh were represented by the Lord Somerleyton (Master of the Horse) at the Memorial Service for the Viscount Boyne (Lord in Waiting and Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire) which was held in St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, this afternoon.
The Prince of Wales was represented by Mr Gerald Ward.
Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester, and The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester were represented by Major Nicholas Barne.
The Duke of Kent was represented by Mr Andrew Palmer.
Princess Alexandra, the Hon Lady Ogilvy was represented by Mrs Peter Afia.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
February 1: The Prince of Wales, Colonel-in-Chief, The Royal Regiment of Wales, received Lieutenant Colonel Peter Davies upon relinquishing his appointment as Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, and Lieutenant Colonel Robert upon assuming the appointment.
KENSINGTON PALACE
February 1: The Princess of Wales, Patron, British Lung Foundation, this evening attended a Gala Performance of La Bohème at the Royal Albert Hall, London SW7.
YORK HOUSE
February 1: The Duke of Kent, President, this evening attended the Engineering Council's Unification Launch dinner, at the Institution of Civil Engineers, Great George Street, London SW1.



Philip Hughes, left, the new chairman of the trustees of the National Gallery, with Raymond Seitz, former American Ambassador to Britain, who has just become a trustee. They are standing in front of one of Paolo Uccello's large-scale panel decorations depicting The Battle of San Romano (1454-57)

Forthcoming marriages

Mr J. George Haines and Miss S.J. Dampany
The engagement is announced between Jacob, elder son of Mr and Mrs Turben Bagge-Hansen, of Haderslev, Denmark, and Alexandra, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Theo Dampany, of Hurn, Christchurch.
Mr G.S. Banner and Miss E.L. Heston
The engagement is announced between Gregory, son of Mr and Mrs John Banner, of Orpington, Kent, and Elizabeth, elder daughter of Mr Bernard Heston, of Misses Island, Essex, and Mrs Margaret Benham, of Newbury, Berkshire, and stepdaughter of Mr John Benham.

Today's royal engagements

The Duke of Kent, as president, will attend the Engineering Council forum at Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre at 10.00.

Today's events

The Queen's Life Guard mounts at Horse Guards at 11.00.

Premium Bonds

The £1 million prize in the Premium Bond draw for February was won with bond number 34LS 83724. The winner, who lives in Co Antrim, has a holding of £5,000.

Luncheon

HM Government
Mr Malcolm Rifkind, QC, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, was the host at a luncheon given by Her Majesty's Government yesterday at Carlton Gardens in honour of Mr Shimon Peres, Prime Minister of Israel.

Reception

HM Government
Mr John M. Taylor, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Competition and Consumer Affairs, was the host yesterday at a reception given by Her Majesty's Government at Leicester House to mark the 20th anniversary of the National Exhibition Centre.

Dinners

Fruiters' Company
Mr M.J. Tangay, Master of the Fruiters' Company, assisted by the Warden, Honorary Colonel of the 10th Regiment, Dr Christopher Skeckley also spoke.

Birthdays today

Mr Roger Brooke, chairman, Canvoo Investments, 65; Mr Ken Bruce, broadcaster, 65; Sir Gordon Byng, former Chief Justice of the Bahamas, 83; the Earl of Clarendon, 63; Dr Macdonald Critchley, neurologist, 96; Mr Andrew Davis, conductor, 52; the Rev Dr Victor de Waal, former Dean of Canterbury, 67; Sir Robert Douglas, fourth Douglas Group of Companies, 97; Lord Eastwell, 81; Mr Abbas Eban, Israeli politician, 81; Dr Tony Flower, economist, 45; Sir Norman Fowler, MP, 88; Mr Valery Giscard d'Estaing, former President of France, 70; Mr Hugh Green, broadcaster, 70; Mr H.V. Hughes, former Principal, Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, 70; Mr David Jason, actor, 56; Mr David Jones, chief executive, Next, 53; Sir Chips Keswick, chairman, Hambros Bank, 56; Dame Ailix Meynell, former secretary, 53; Miss Elaine Strick, actress, 69.

Royal Warrant Holders

Colonel Christopher Pickup has been appointed Secretary of the Royal Warrant Holders Association in succession to Commander Hugh Faulkner who has retired.

Appointment

Mr Jim McCulloch has been appointed Ambassador to Iceland from mid-May in succession to Mr Michael Howe who will be retiring from the Diplomatic Service.

Latest wills

Mr John Greville Brantson, of Nouthorpe, Cleveland, left estate valued at £5,512,009 net.
The late, a number of bequests, including real property and life interests, worth £150,000, had the residue of his estate to his wife, and the remainder of his estate to the Jack Brantson Charitable Trust.

Viscount Boyne

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh were represented by Lord Somerleyton as a service of thanksgiving for the life and work of Viscount Boyne held yesterday at St Laurence's, Ludlow, Shropshire.
The Prince of Wales was represented by Mr Gerald Ward, Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester, and the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester by Major Nicholas Barne, the Duke of Kent by Mr Andrew Palmer and Princess Alexandra by Mrs Peter Afia.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Nell Gwynn, actress and mistress of King Charles II, Hereford, 1650; Sir Joseph Banks, naturalist, London, 1743; Hannah More, evangelist and educator, Fishponds, Bristol, 1745; Charles Murray de Tallary-Herford, statesman, Hereford, France, 1764; Henry Havlock Ellis, physician and writer, Croydon, London, 1859; Fritz Kreisler, violinist, Vienna, 1875; James Joyce, novelist, Dublin, 1882; James Stephens, poet and novelist, Dublin, 1892; Jascha Heifetz, violinist, Vilnius, 1891; DEATHS: Baldassar Castiglione, diplomat and writer, Toledo, 1529; Giovanni Palestrina, composer, Rome, 1594; Francis Hayman, painter, London, 1776; Dmitri Mendeleev, chemist, St Petersburg, 1883; John L. Sullivan, bare knuckle fighter, Boston, Massachusetts, 1918; Sir Owen Seaman, Editor of Punch 1906-32, London, 1936; the Rev James Owen Hanney (George Birmingham), novelist, London, 1960; Buddy Holly, singer and songwriter, died in an air crash, near Mason City, Iowa, 1959; Bertrand Russell, 3rd Earl Russell, mathematician and philosopher, Plas Penrhyn, Merionethshire, 1970; George Wittkop, pathologist, Nobel laureate 1934, New York, 1976.

Memorial services

County Council. Among others present were Viscountesses Boyne (widow), Mr and Mrs Sir John Arthur (widow) and daughter, Viscountess Boyne (daughter-in-law), Lord and Lady Cobbold, Mr and Mrs Walter Woodhouse, Mr John Lord, Major J. G. Cottrill, Colonel and Mrs James Hamilton-Russell, Major John Hamilton-Russell, Colonel and Mrs Brian Hamilton-Russell, Mrs Elizabeth Hamilton-Russell, Mrs Norma Jones, the Hon Jonathan Rogers, Major Sir John Rogers, Major Sir Charles Plint, Mr and Mrs John Stinson, Mr and Mrs John Matthews, Mrs Mary Rogers and Mrs J. Brasse, Mr and Mrs John Woodcock and other members of family and friends.

Church news

Archdeacon of Tonbridge
Canon Judith Rose, Acting Archdeacon of Tonbridge, diocese Rochester, is to be Archdeacon of Tonbridge, succeeding the Ven Richard Mason who has retired.
Appointments
The Rev Laurence Blaney, Rector, Fosse, St Gabriel to be Priest-in-charge, Maryland St Barnabas and St Stephen, Church of the Holy Trinity, Fosse, St Gabriel, and All Saints (Chesham).
The Rev Paul Burridge-Butler, Curate, Handsworth Woodhouse (Stafford); to be Vicar, St Dunstan, Wellington (Southwark).
The Rev Christopher Byers, Team Rector, Thamesmead Team Ministry (Southwark); to be an Honorary Canon of Southwark Cathedral.
The Rev Peter Clark, Vicar, Christ St James and St John, Priory Church, to be Vicar, St Alphrage, Hertford Road, Edmonstone (London).
The Rev Leslie Collins, Curate, Corleston St Andrew (Norwich); to be Team Vicar, Barnbury Team Ministry (Oxford).
The Rev Gary Colville, Priest-in-charge, Foots Cray, to be Rector, Foots Cray (Rochester).
The Rev John Day, Vicar, St Margaret, Thornbury (Bradford); to be Vicar, St Mary, Whitekirk (Ripon).
The Rev Stephen Edwards; to be Chaplain of HM Prison, Maidstone (Canterbury).
The Rev John Ewington, Vicar, St Saviour, Southsea on Sea (Christchurch); to be Vicar, Northway Team Ministry (Exeter).
The Rev Robert Garry, Curate, Ewias Harold Team Ministry to be Curate, Tuppard (Hereford).
The Rev Marion Goddard, Acting Assistant Chaplain, Greenwich District Hospital; to be Team Vicar, William Temple Church, Thame (Oxford).
The Rev Charles Green, Head of Religious Studies, RNIB New College, Worcester; to be Vicar, All Saints, Clifton (Southwell).
The Rev Janet Hui; to be Deacon (NSA), Thame v Towcey (Oxford).
The Rev Dr Jonathan Trig, Vicar, St Thomas, Oakwood; to be Vicar St Michael, Highgate (London).

Church news

The Rev Gwyn Clement, Assistant Curate, New Street, Wisley, Australia, and Lucy, daughter of Mr and Mrs Donald Kennedy, of Claygate, Surrey.
Lieutenant Commander S. Carus, USNR, and Miss C. Deane
The engagement is announced between Stephen, son of Mrs J. Eaker, of New Hampshire, and Caroline, daughter of Mr and Mrs Evelyn Dent, of Haslemere, Surrey.
Mr S.J. Decker and Miss A.J. Barker-Davies
The engagement is announced between Sebastian John, son of the late Dr Basil Decker, and of Mrs Joan Decker, of South Kensington, London, and Amanda Jane, daughter of Mr Clive Barker-Davies, of Paris, France, and of Mrs Colin Bothway, of Colton, Norfolk.
Mr D.R. Dimbleby and Miss C. Simeonoff
The engagement is announced between Daniel, son of Mr and Mrs Jonathan Dimbleby, of Bath, Avon, and Clare, daughter of Mr and Mrs Jeremy Simeonoff, of Cookham Dean, Berkshire.
Mr C.P.R. DUBOIS and Miss F.E. Bachy
The engagement is announced between Charles, son of Mr and Mrs Peter DUBOIS, of Bramley, Surrey, and France Eleonore, daughter of Mr and Mrs Pierre Bachy, of St Les, La Fave, France.
Mr J.D. Farr and Miss J.H. Gardner
The engagement is announced between Julian David, son of Mr and Mrs D.E.C. Farr, of Boston, Massachusetts, and Jane Helen, daughter of Tony and Mary Gardner, of Ulverston, Cumbria.

Legal appointment

Mr Austin Bruno Issard-Davies to be a Circuit Judge, assigned to the South Eastern Circuit.

Reception

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Advertisement section containing various notices, including DEATHS, MEMORIAL SERVICES, TICKETS FOR SALE, DOMESTIC & CATERING SITUATIONS WANTED, FLATSHARE, GIFTS, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, ACCESS TICKETS, TICKETS FOR SALE, SITUATIONS WANTED, SPECIALISTS, WANTED, UK HOLIDAYS, WINTER SPORTS, OVERSEAS TRAVEL, and FLIGHTS DIRECTORY.

OBITUARIES

SIR JOHN CARMICHAEL

Sir John Carmichael, KBE, civil servant, businessman and golfer, died on January 6 aged 85. He was born on April 22, 1910.



JOHN CARMICHAEL returned to his native Scotland from Sudan in the late 1960s. The experience he had gained in Africa as a civil servant and financial and economic adviser to the first post-independence Sudanese Government made him a welcome addition to the boardrooms of several top British companies.

Carmichael was also a first-class golfer, who played off a single-figure handicap. He could often be seen striding around the Old Course at St Andrews, and won the Royal and Ancient's Jubilee Vase there in 1964. He was captain of the Royal and Ancient, 1974-75.

John Carmichael was born in St Andrews and educated there at Madras College. He graduated from St Andrews University with first class honours in mathematics and physics. He was given his rugby Blue, and had a trial for the Scottish team. Although he never won a cap, he was a reserve on 13 occasions.

After a year on a Commonwealth Fellowship at the University of Michigan, he returned to Britain and joined Guardian Assurance. Then in 1936 he decided on a complete change of career. He joined the Sudanese Civil Service, and went out to Sudan, where his duties included a spell as Permanent Under-Secretary to the Ministry of Finance.

Sudan was one of the few African countries to retain the service of some British civil servants after independence. Carmichael stayed on after 1956, and Ismail al-Azhar, the first Prime Minister, later fondly described him as "the white man in our woodpile".

species of heather in Scotland. He was appointed to the UK delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations and the following year, 1960, joined Fisons as a non-executive director, initially as chairman of its pest-control subsidiary in Sudan.

Two years later he was made chief executive of Fisons, succeeding Avison Wormald. Carmichael brought in George Burton as his deputy chief executive, and while Burton concentrated on overseas trade, Carmichael turned his mind to the home market.

Wormald had already begun the process of diversification of Fisons interests, and Carmichael continued the process. For the past century, the Fisons market had been largely UK-based. Carmichael made it more of an international player, and he spent a good deal of time abroad, travelling with Burton to India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Kenya and Uganda.

Dundee, to a major provider of services to the nascent oil industry in Scotland. When he arrived, jute, the product on which the business's fortunes were founded, was increasingly being provided not by Dundee companies but by those in Bangladesh and Calcutta.

In 1972 Carmichael organised the lease (subsequently the purchase) of reclaimed land within the port area of Peterhead, north of Aberdeen. The company began to organise the logistics of the management of these ports, and so got involved, at just the right moment, in North Sea oil. The period from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s was one of substantial growth for Sidlaw, much of it attributable to Carmichael's timely initiative.

He was also chairman of the Herring Advisory Board, 1960-63, and deputy chairman of the Independent Television Authority, 1960-63. By the mid-1970s he had reduced his commitments in the South and was concentrating his energies in Scotland. He served on the boards of the Royal Bank of Scotland, Abbey National, and the Scottish Development Advisory Board. He was appointed KBE in 1955.

Carmichael was a softly-spoken man, with a disarming, jocular smile. He enjoyed family life, and every year took his family on holiday, sometimes less successfully than others. One year, he rented a caravan with which to tour Scotland. He reached as far as Speyside, not much north of St Andrews, before discovering that he had little idea how to reverse the cumbersome vehicle, let alone park it.

Those who knew him well suspected that he may never have had any real intention of venturing further north than Speyside. With many good golf courses at hand, there seemed little reason to.

He is survived by his wife Cecilia, whom he married in 1940, and by one son and three daughters.

JOHN EDLIN

John Edlin, journalist, died in Johannesburg after a stroke on January 29 aged 50. He was born in Invercargill, New Zealand, on August 21, 1945.



TO THE despair of his editors — and to the delight of his readers — John Edlin decided early on in his 33-year-long career as a journalist in Africa that real stories could be gathered just as easily in bars and shebeens as by more orthodox means. But, despite achieving cult status as a heroic drinker and featuring as a thinly disguised hell-raising character in a number of excellent novels set in Africa, John Edlin always remained a fine reporter.

For more than three decades, he traversed independent Africa making friends and enemies of some of the most influential politicians; he was expelled from seven countries and jailed in at least two.

He witnessed mass starvation in Ethiopia in 1985 and once described how he had watched doctors marking the foreheads of children who could be saved. He asked Mother Teresa what could be done to help the others. "What are you going to do?" she said. Edlin considered the question over a beer or two, and in six months had provided start-up funds for an orphanage for 600 children outside Addis Ababa.

Divorced but childless, he had earlier funded the education of his three children.

John Edlin came to Southern Rhodesia from New Zealand in 1963 and went to work for a number of Rhodesian newspapers before leaving for Zambia and the Congo. Hired by the South African-owned Argus Africa News Service, he rebased himself in Ghana and travelled widely throughout

West Africa, breaking many trips to retrace the steps of Graham Greene's *Journey without Maps*.

Edlin provided the novelist David Powell with the model for a raucous young reporter from New Zealand, John Pyper, in his two novels set in Zambia, *The Raining Tree* and *African Horse*.

Returning to Southern Africa from Ghana in 1972, he worked for British newspapers and Reuters before becoming a full-time Associated Press correspondent in Rhodesia in 1976. At the time of his stroke on the dance floor of a nightclub in Dakar, Edlin had completed a year-long assignment teaching African journalists in Senegal.

He is survived by his mother and two brothers.

BRIGADIER BILL VICKERS

Brigadier Bill Vickers, DSO, OBE, died on January 28 aged 82. He was born on January 19, 1914.



THE challenge of commanding an infantry battalion other than one of one's own regiment is always formidable. The task faced by Bill Vickers, a tall, raw-boned man of rather gaunt aspect, was especially so. After 22 years of service exclusively with British troops, he was appointed to command 2nd Battalion 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles), whose stocky, tough but unfailingly humorous soldiers stood only as high as his shoulder. This was in Hong Kong in January 1956 but the battalion was due to move to Malaya, where the eight-year-old communist insurrection still smouldered on.

west of the Malay peninsula. By that stage of the campaign, the tide had turned against the insurgents, thanks to the far-sighted policies of the successive Directors of Operations, Generals Sir Harold Briggs and Sir Gerald Templer.

During the second half of 1956, Vickers concentrated on the Kuala Pilah district, where operations by "A" company of the battalion, commanded by Major Grahame Vivian, acting on Special Branch information and intelligence from surrendered terrorists, killed or captured several of the key communist leaders in the area.

The following year saw 2nd/2nd Goorkhas operating in the neighbouring state of Johore, where a high proportion of the predominantly Chinese population persisted in their support of the terrorists still in the jungle. Accompanied by a Special Branch officer and only a small escort, Vickers trekked into the interior on four occasions to negotiate personally the surrender of terrorists. He was mentioned in dispatches in 1957 and the

citation for his award of the DSO in 1958 read: "Lieutenant-Colonel Vickers has added to the renown and fighting traditions of his regiment and proved himself to be a fearless, skilled and determined leader. Inspired by his leadership, his men achieved many successes in jungle operations against a wary, treacherous and dangerous enemy."

Arthur William Neville Langston Vickers was born in London, the son of William C. L. Vickers, an electrical engineer. He was educated at Clifton, which he represented at cricket, rugby, chess and boxing, and entered the Royal Military College Sandhurst via a cadet scholarship in 1932. He was commissioned into the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry in 1934.

After prewar service in India and Burma with the 2nd KOYLI, Vickers was recalled to France in 1939. Later, as part of the 15th Infantry Brigade, the same battalion took part in the ill-fated British intervention in Norway. Virtually without air support, the brigade was landed near the Aandalsnes fiord on April 13, 1940, only to be withdrawn 12 days later in the face of the German advance northwards up the Gudbrand Valley from Oslo, strongly supported by the Luftwaffe.

After staff college in 1941 and appointments in England, he returned to regimental service as second-in-command of 4th Battalion The Somerset Light Infantry in time for the Normandy invasion. He was wounded and evacuated, only to return as soon as he had recovered, this time in command of the 1st Battalion The Worcestershire Regiment in the 43rd Wessex Division, which saw stiff fighting in Holland and Germany in the winter of 1944-45.

He was appointed OBE in 1945 in recognition of his war service and posted to the Staff College, Camberley, as an instructor in 1948. Shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War, he was appointed AA & QMG of the 1st Commonwealth Division. The years 1951-52 were the grimmest of this gruelling war, during which Vickers was mentioned in dispatches and awarded the United States Bronze Star. A brief period with 2nd KOYLI was followed by brevet promotion to lieutenant-colonel, a period on the Allied Staff in Berlin and then command of 2nd/2nd Gurkha Rifles.

Following his successful period in command, he was promoted colonel and served on the Nato staff of Allied Forces Central Europe and as an instructor at the RAF Staff College, before being appointed Inspector of Intelligence and Commandant of the Joint Services Intelligence Centre in the rank of brigadier. He retired from the Army in 1967 but remained in government service, engaged in security work, until 1970.

For eight years he served as general secretary of the Soil Association, working with E. F. Schumacher and Lady Eve Balfour. For many years during his retirement he was an active member of the Soldiers' Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association, but was able to find time to play single-figure handicap golf and local cricket in and around Harleston in Norfolk, where he had made his home.

He is survived by his wife Joan, whom he married in 1939, and by their two sons and two daughters.

THE RAF RISES TO THE CHALLENGE

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The Donkey Sanctuary, (Dept TM), Sidmouth, Devon, EX10 0NU. Tel: (01395) 578222. Enquiries to Dr E. D. Svendsen, MBE Reg. Charity No. 264818

LAWRENCE AND HIS LEGEND

RICHARD ALDINGTON: *Lawrence of Arabia*. A Biographical Enquiry. Harp Collins, 2s.

The title of the French edition of Mr Aldington's book — *Lawrence, l'Empireur* — more frankly acknowledges its character than the subtitle of the English: a "biographical enquiry". He has searched the already published literature by and about Lawrence for every scrap of material that can be turned to his victim's discredit.

Lawrence is vulnerable to this kind of attack. A great popular legend was built up for him in the early 1920s, and inflated with unneeded many of which today seem not only false but foolish. Mr Aldington adduces evidence to show that Lawrence was conscious of it, castigated himself for it, and could not escape from it. In truth, vanity of the kind that "broke into the limelight", was Lawrence's besetting weakness; some of his warmest admirers have acknowledged it. He himself was conscious of it, castigated himself for it, and could not escape from it.

It does not follow, however, that the military value of the Arab revolt was insignificant and the credit for such success as it achieved stolen by Lawrence from other men, which is Mr Aldington's thesis. We have the testimony of Colonel Saïring, Staff Officer with the Arab forces, that "Lawrence took the limelight from those of us professional soldiers who were fortunate enough to serve with him, but never once have I heard a whisper of jealousy. We sensed that we were serving with a man immeasurably our superior."

Mr Aldington opens with what he chooses to call "research", that Lawrence was born out of wedlock — a fact that any of Lawrence's friends, or Lawrence himself in his lifetime, would have given him for the asking.

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ON THIS DAY

February 2, 1955

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Commissioner to Egypt in 1925. Attention is thus diverted from the very strong evidence that depended upon Lawrence's word that he was sounded about taking the same office in 1922 by Mr Winston Churchill, under whom he was then serving in the Colonial Office. Again, when Mr Aldington admits that "he was offered by a banker, and refused, a position in the City of London", it is not a little disingenuous not to mention that the banker was Montagu Norman, and the position that of Secretary of the Bank of England?

But, as has been said, Lawrence's greatness is not to be assessed by details. To Mr Aldington it is a myth fabricated by "the Lawrence Bureau". We have to consider who the Lawrence Bureau were. The Arab Revolt was, as Lawrence himself said only the sideshow of a sideshow. Yes, for its great importance to the larger campaign the witness is Allenby, the commander-in-chief; for Lawrence's unique leadership and fitness for the highest command, Wavel; for his capacity for the greatest civilian offices, Sir Winston Churchill; for his close friendship, Hogarth, Sir Leonard Woolley, and Sir Ernest Barker; for his literary skills, Wells and Sir Winston Churchill; for his political quality as an adversary, Clemenceau. It is permissible to prefer the judgment of the Lawrence Bureau to Mr Aldington's.

His worst enemy does not think Lawrence a dull subject; and Mr Aldington is not usually a dull writer. But he has managed to write an uncommonly dull book.

PERSONAL COLUMN containing various advertisements including Flights Directory, Announcements, The RAF Rises to the Challenge, Kidney Research Saves Lives, Remember The Donkeys And We'll Remember You!, Helping House the Homeless, Trailfinders, and Church Housing Trust.

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NEWS

Tories rule out leadership poll

Senior Conservatives capitalised on improved party morale by formally ruling out any challenge to John Major's leadership before the next general election.

The surprise move came after a series of strong question time performances by the Prime Minister exploiting the Harriet Harman affair, and as the Labour leader himself acknowledged the gains the Tories had reaped.

Internet shopping boom forecast

The Internet is set to become a multi-billion pound world superstore. Two leading credit card companies announced that they have developed a way of making safe payments over the electronic computer network that encircles the globe.

Dog judgment

A tearful and acrimonious battle over the ownership of J.J., a potentially valuable Irish setter pup was decided when a judge agreed it could remain with the couple who bought it.

Dawn exhumation

Police exhumed the body of the man they believe to be Scotland's most notorious killer at dawn in a snow-covered cemetery.

Paying the piper

Thousands of composers and songwriters have been deprived of income by inefficiency and poor management at the Performing Rights Society, said a government report.

Missing doctors

Hospital casualty departments are facing the worst shortage of doctors in living memory and are struggling to keep their doors open, said the BMA.

Firemen killed

Two part-time firemen died inside a blazing house in the former mining village of Blaenau, Gwent, after wrongly being told a young boy was trapped inside.

Royal accountant

The post of the Keeper of the Privy Purse is going to Michael Peat, a former partner in the accounts, KPMG.

Church pensions

The Anglican Church's 1.5 million regular attenders will be expected to dig deeper in their pockets to fund the clergy's pensions under proposals to go before the General Synod next week.

Harman row

The row over Harriet Harman's decision to send her son to a selective grammar school provoked a series of bitter internal riffs in her constituency Labour party at Camberwell.

Birthday unrest

Half a million miners chose President Yeltsin's 65th birthday to go on a nationwide strike in an echo of the industrial action that helped to bring down Mikhail Gorbachev.

Airline dispute

The British Government may mount a legal challenge to the European Commission's decision to let Iberia, Spain's national airline, receive another £440 million in state aid.

Chirac's charter

President Chirac, on the first state visit to America by a French leader in 12 years, proposed a charter to reform Nato.

Dole gaffe

Robert Dole's handlers arranged for the 72-year-old presidential candidate to visit a brewery then tried to cancel when they discovered it produced a beer called 'Old Man Ale'.

Wedge-shaped UFO over Manchester

A British Airways jet had a close encounter with an unidentified flying object while landing at Manchester. The Boeing 737 was overtaken at high speed by a wedge-shaped craft. Captain Roger Wright reported that the UFO, emblazoned with small white lights and possibly a black stripe, flashed so close that his co-pilot ducked.



The Princess Royal examines bales of wool at a shearing shed during her visit to Goose Green in the Falkland Islands

BUSINESS

PPP: The private healthcare insurance group is poised to shed its provident status and turn itself into a limited company valued at an estimated £500 million. The move could pave the way for an eventual stockmarket flotation.

Economy: Production from British manufacturers hit its lowest point for three years, leading to the first decline in manufacturing employment for two years.

Retail: Stephen Hinchliffe, the Sheffield businessman, is set to expand his empire with the purchase of Saxe and Curtiss.

Markets: The FT-SE 100 fell 6.5 to 3752.8. Sterling rose from 83.3 to 83.6 after rises from \$1,510 to \$1,527 and from DM2,247 to DM2,2597.

SPORT

Football: Roger Stanislaus, of Leyton Orient, was banned for one year by the FA after being found guilty of using a performance-enhancing drug.

Cricket: Australia may forfeit their first game in the World Cup unless the venue is changed from Colombo. A decision will be made early next week.

Rugby union: For all the talk of expansive play the primary objective for England and Wales in the five nations' championship match at Twickenham tomorrow will be to win.

Sliding: The Great Britain women's alpine skiing team have returned to the Tyrolean mountains that claimed the life of Kirsteen McGibbon.

ARTS

Taste of Bacon: As an unknown self-portrait by Francis Bacon is unveiled to the public for the first time, Richard Cork assesses its importance as a work of art.

Theatrical death: Fields of Ambrosia, an American musical set on Death Row, really is as ghastly as it sounds, says Benedict Nightingale.

Italy's finest: Crooner Paolo Conte may not be a household name in Britain but he is now bringing his Italian charms to the Barbican.

Youthful twin track: The chart wannabes Gemini, twin brothers, have found a novel way to get their musical message across to the young: they are taking it into the schools.

LEISURE

Valerie Groves meets Thomas Quasthoff, the singer who received tumultuous applause at the Wigmore Hall this week.

Smack: When the film Train-spotting comes out later this month, people who know nothing about it will come forward to give their opinions on drug addiction. But just what is the depressing reality?

EDUCATION

Driven to revolt: Today, Vice-Chancellors will decide whether to charge new students a levy of £300 - a first step towards paying for higher education.

Tricks of the exam trade: How to choose a tutorial college for Easter revision, and get the most out of it.



IN THE TIMES

EAT OUT FOR £5 Lunch, or dinner, for as little as £5 - see The Times on Saturday for details and first voucher

PLUS... Jonathan Meades reviews six of the best restaurants on offer

OPINION

Nato must cease being a simple tool of American policy, under instruction from the Pentagon. The US must accept the development, in the heart of the alliance, of a real European defence identity.

Preview: A solar-powered tickshaw could be the transport of the future: Tomorrow's World in Song Day (BBC1, 7.30pm). Review: Matthew Bond checks out a political drinking-hole.

Spanish malpractice

Powers to police state subsidies are among the strongest that the Commission has. Why should national Governments grant it any increased powers at this year's review of the Maastricht treaty when existing powers are used in such an anti-European way?

Degree quality

Support seems solid among vice-chancellors for a proposal to charge £500 as the price of a place at university. The proposal, though crude, has one merit: it focuses attention on the need for further reform in academia.

Young masters

An unknown self-portrait by Francis Bacon, painted when he was only 21, has just been discovered in a private collection of paintings. This is a significant discovery, for Bacon destroyed much of his own youthful work.

BERNARD LEVIN

Arthur Scargill is very close to making himself a fool; his new party will get a handful of votes about the same number as Lord Sutch - and his new 'party' will wither on the vine.

SIMON BARNES

It was the Australians who first called the settlers from England whinging Poms. But this eternal complaint about the Poms is itself a kind of whinge.

PETER RIDDELL

The debate about MPs' pay is much broader than review bodies or even salary levels. It is about what sort of MPs we want.

OBITUARIES

Sir John Carmichael, civil servant and businessman; John Edlin, journalist; Brigadier Bill Vickers, James Holland, a designer of the Festival of Britain.

LETTERS

Solutions to university funding crisis: MPs demand for pay rise; treatment for backache; ghostly smells.

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,080

A crossword puzzle grid with numbers indicating the starting positions for the clues. The grid is a standard 15x15 format.

- ACROSS: 1 Direction given to people to find place for meeting (10). 6 Retired judge gets old-fashioned reward (4). 9 Imperative exercise taken by soldiers and politicians (10). 10 A point lower - and lighter (4). 12 Choice of words in men's curses (12). 15 Suspended, perhaps, but under control (2,1,6). 17 Better part of Venice ruined (5). 18 Breed fish, so to speak (5). 19 Phone repair workers, achieving first-class marvellous things (9). 20 Stalker in old conflict has to find accommodation for workers (12). 24 Informally opposed to taking a drink (4).

A section for puzzle solutions, including a 'SECOND PERSON' puzzle and a 'HEALTHCENTRE' puzzle. The solutions are provided in a grid format.

TIMES WEATHERCALL

A table showing weather forecasts for various regions in the UK, including London, Kent, Devon, and Wales. It includes details on temperature, cloud cover, and precipitation.

FORECASTS

General: England and Wales will have a largely dry day with most cloud in the east. There will be bright or sunny spells across many areas. Fog or freezing fog patches may linger in places. Widespread frost will return overnight. Scotland and Northern Ireland will be mostly dry, brightest in the west.

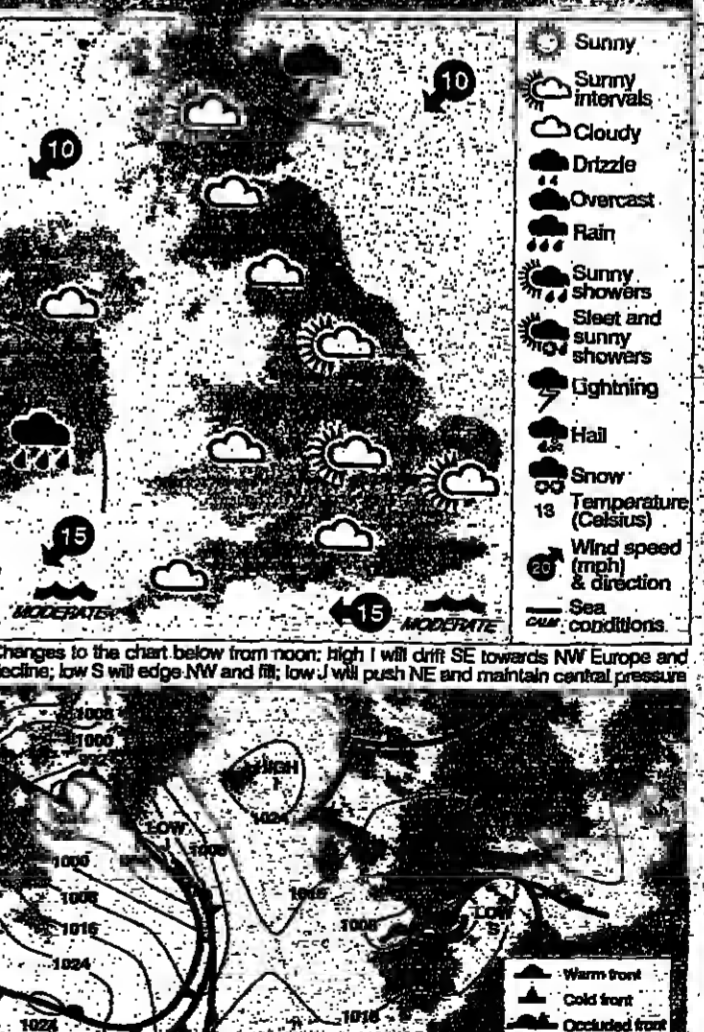
AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

A table showing weather conditions around Britain yesterday, including temperature, wind speed, and precipitation for various locations like Aberdeen, London, and Cardiff.

ABROAD

A table showing weather forecasts for various international locations, including Moscow, Tokyo, Sydney, and London.

WEATHER



Changes to the chart below from noon: High I will drift SE towards NW Europe and decline; low S will edge NW and fill; low J will push NE and maintain central pressure.

A table showing temperature forecasts for various locations, including London, Manchester, and Birmingham, with columns for AM, PM, and HT (High Temperature).

Copyright reserved. All times GMT. Heights in metres. Yesterday: Highest day temp: Gurney, 10°C; lowest day temp: Buxton, Derbyshire, -10°C; highest night temp: Letchworth, 10°C; highest sunshine: Folkestone, Dover, 8.1 hr.

An advertisement for Bermuda Tourism. The text reads: 'The outlook in Bermuda is heavenly. For our 1996 brochure, call Bermuda Tourism on 01753 517 517 quoting ref: TWS or see your travel agent.'